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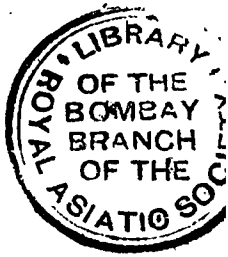
JOURNAL OF A DIPLOMATE'S

THREE YEARS' RESIDENCE IN PERSIA.



BY

EDWARD B. EASTWICK, F.R.S., F.S.A.,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE,

LATE H.M.'S CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES AT THE COURT OF TEHRAN;

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN; OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF PARIS, AND OF THE ORIENTAL SOCIETY OF GERMANY; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF FRANCE, MEMBER OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, AND FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ANTIQUARIES.

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TO

SULTÁN MURÁD MIRZA,

HISÁMU'S SALTANAH, PRINCE-GOVERNOR OF KHÚRÁSÁN,

THE

ILLUSTRIOUS SON OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS ABBÁS MIRZA,

CONQUEROR OF MESHED, MERV, AND HERÁT,

UNCLE OF THE REIGNING SHÁH OF PERSIA, AND HIS ABLEST AND MOST DEVOTED SERVANT,

THESE SKETCHES OF PERSIA

ARE INSCRIBED IN TOKEN OF FAREWELL, AND AS A FEEBLE MARK OF ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM,

BY HIS FAITHFUL AND ATTACHED FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.

London, February 20, 1864.

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PREFACE.

It is only right to say that, in order to avoid personality, several names have been altered in this narrative, even although the anecdotes are harmless enough. In like manner, the initials T——, &c., applied to Europeans, are taken at random, and are not the real initials.

It must also be observed that Excellency is a title applied in the East to persons of all ranks, and is not restricted to the high personages for whom it is reserved in England.

With regard to M. Ferrier's interesting work, although, as in duty bound, I have noted some things in which I differ from him, I feel pleasure in testifying to his general accuracy as far as I have travelled over the same ground.

THE AUTHOR.

JOURNAL

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CHAPTER I.

Popular Notions of Persia—From Pimlico to Paris—Musicos at Sea — L'Ambassade Anglaise — Paris to Marseilles — Delights of travelling with Invalids — A Railway Panic — Marseilles to Athens.

"GOOD-BY, then," said C——, "I wish you a safe arrival at Ispahan, and a speedy return to England."

"Thanks," I replied, "but why talk of Ispahan? I answer your wish with the Persian proverb, 'A wise enemy is better than a foolish friend.' Surely my journey of three thousand miles is enough, without sending me four hundred and fifty further to

Ispahan. Know that Tehran is the capital of Persia since 1786—is it not so in the copy-books ?"

"Tehran ! all right," said C——, "don't believe six people ever heard of it. Never mind, you make it famous, and—good-by."

As I walked away I met another acquaintance, who, on hearing I was going to Persia, asked if the Parsis were not worshippers of the sun. A third friend consigned me to Baghdad, and a fourth envied my coming propinquity to Cashmeer, and supposed I should often run up there in summer.

"Enough !" I exclaimed to myself in the words of Picrochole's advisers; "il n'est ja besoin pour ceste heure. N'est-ce pas assez tracassé, de avoir transfrété la mer Hyrcane et chevaulché les deux Arménies ?"

Those remarks of my friends, intelligent parties enough, struck me as a very good index of the indifference and ignorance about Persia which are so observable in England, and which, it is said, were the cause of an incurable indigestion to the last Persian ambassador, who went back and died of it—though, to be sure, he was old enough to have died

any way. The same thing returned to my recollection as I found myself in the train on my way to Tehran. I felt positive disquietude in going to a place that no one seemed to know or care about.

"Really, it is curious," thought I; "of ancient empires, not one was so splendid as the Persian! Greece, Rome, and Palestine excepted, no ancient country fills so many pages in history as Persia—yet who knows and who cares aught about Persia as it really is? A region thrice as large as *la belle France*, with ten millions of the wittiest, handsomest, most agreeable people in the world for its inhabitants, ought to be more in the market than this." Such were my ruminations as the Dover express hurried me along on my way to take up my duties as Secretary of Legation at Tehran. "Secretary of Legation, that's very well, but at Tehran, ah! that spoils it. Hand me the scales of judgment, that I may weigh the question—Persia or England? I begin to think I have been wrong in changing. Let me see, pleasure of visiting new countries, leisure for learning new languages, possible promotion, wider sphere of usefulness. Drop that into one scale; now for the

other. Comfort and cleanliness, general immunity from filth, fleas, flies, and fevers, civilized society, England, home and no musquito curtains wanted! Hi! stop the train—I will return. Well, it is too late now to talk of returning; let us see, as the Persians say, what the veil of the future will disclose."

I had full time for my reverie. I had the compartment all to myself. The train was a long one; there were several hundreds of gabbling Frenchmen in it—I smelt their cigarettes, I saw them occasionally grimacing to one another from the windows, but they could not come nigh me, whereat I was not sorry, Orphéonistes though they were. I was not in a gregarious mood, and would have shunned Orpheus himself, and given him back Eurydice if I had had her, for the pleasure of being alone. For would not another hour rob my eyes of merrie England, of England that looked more beautiful than ever on that bright summer day? It was the first of July, 1860, and Sunday. I am not a Sabbatarian, I showed it by travelling on Sunday as required; I hate the whole class of words with that termination—Sab-

batarian, Arian, sectarian, barbarian, and the rest; but I do love an English Sabbath, the village church bells and the village belles, the peaceful country stroll and the pause in the thundering business torrent of our great cities. To think of——but here we are at Dover. A man with seven large portmanteaux, no servant, and a distant destination, must not indulge himself in reveries except on very special occasions, and even then must run through them as rapidly as possible. I have cleared my luggage, I have asked several useless and unanswered questions, run against two or three robust officials, and made my way to the steamer. There is a blue sky and a fresh breeze—the deck is covered with groaning Orphéonistes. Their cheerful jabber has died away, they have hung their harps on their pillows—all is hushed, but sounds I will not here describe.

We are now at Boulogne. The days of passports not being yet numbered, we produce ours. Owner of a red passport and bearer of despatches, I secure certain amenities, of which a short shrift and a speedy exit are the most remarkable. This time I am not in solitude. In the compartment

there is a lady pretty and petite, which makes the dimensions of her prodigious *jupons* more remarkable. There is also Monsieur son Mari, who smokes interminable cigarettes. These are succeeded by an *agronome* who discourses to me of manures, and praises the Free Trade Convention and Sir Cobden. He descends at Amiens and is replaced by three evident Parisians, a gentleman and two ladies, whose talk is sprightly and reminds me of the characters in De Musset's *Caprice*, but here I am overtaken by a violent neuralgic pain which fixes my attention until I find myself *au cinquième* at the Louvre.

On Monday, the 2nd of July, I am, as a matter of civility, at Lord ——'s. I am going to Naples, to Athens, to Constantinople. I leave my card, and would be happy to take anything for Lord ——, if his lordship has aught to send; something highly inconvenient, for example, that no haughty aristocrat could be induced on any terms to handle. *That* would exactly suit, and be a highly proper charge for a secretary going to Tehran, *in partibus infidelium;* while, of course, a diplomate of the true tinge would evade the

nuisance. The last time I came to Paris Mr. —— had a dog in charge, a very grievous cur—a cur that snapped, howled, and, when possible, absconded. If there be a cur for transmission, my card will evoke a response. If not, I shall fare like Smith, who said to me *suffusis genis*, "I am aware that his lordship is accredited to the Emperor of the French, and not to the four thousand Englishmen, *gens comme il faut*, who visit Paris annually. I have heard that observation before, I have studied its hidden meaning, I do not assent to it. My belief is that an English ambassador should be generous, hospitable, affable, of good report. I have lived in Paris, I know what two hundred and seventy-five thousand francs a year, with a palace to lodge in gratis, could effect. Enough, *passons outre!*" There is something in these remarks of Smith, but still I think him in the wrong. It is so difficult to draw the line in entertaining, when the métier is once accepted. Besides, there would be a daily succession of *on-dits*, *canards*, and *histoires de coq-à-l'âne*, with the eternal asseveration that they came from Lord ——. There can be no such oracles

now, since the numen is always invisible, and the afflatus wanting.

At 8 P.M. I got into the Marseilles train, under circumstances which led me to renew a disquisition I have often had with myself as to the existence of "luck." Reason of course rejects the Daseyn of τύχη altogether; but, practically, one is continually led to admit it; nay, more, to anathematize it in good set terms. Given, a person singularly ill-constituted for supporting extreme heat, and that deprivation of oxygen which is commonly called "stuffiness;" one feels inclined to think it unfortunate that such an individual should have to travel from Paris to Marseilles on the very hottest night of the year, a night, in fact, of heat ultra-exceptional, in which the excess of heat of several exceptional nights in several exceptional years had been added on, just where in reason it ought to have been subtracted. Suppose, next, this individual, for whom you are already disposed to create that not strictly logical term, "unfortunate," to be seeking an empty carriage, and his search to result in his being deposited in one with every seat occupied by human beings, and

every hole and corner stuffed with the most uncomfortable specimens of what are rightly called traps; traps, indeed, to catch, not that troublesome sunbeam launched on your profile by the rising or the setting sun, but your feet when you would extend them; traps to hit your head on your up-rising, and to try your temper on your sitting down. Under such a combination of circumstances, logic will be trampled on, and, justifiably or not, you I will, think, go as far as to call the sufferer, "doosid unlucky, 'pon my word." Please now to add two invalid ladies (one pretty, it must be admitted) to the cauldron, and two tall, bulky relatives devotedly attached to the interesting *poitrinaires*, and so wrapped up in them as to be bent on sacrificing their own lives and those of the strangers around, rather than allow the most infinitesimal portion of open window to admit an atom of astonished air into the furnace. I think we have now got to a combination of coincidences which would justify any man in exclaiming, with a total disregard of philosophical principles, "What infernal luck!"

The night passed on in furtive attempts on my part at lowering the window, rendered abortive by an

appealing cough of Madame or a stern remonstrance of Monsieur. At midnight, to my inexpressible joy and relief, the train came to a dead stop for half an hour. Our engine had broken down, and it was necessary to telegraph for another. The conductor made no attempt to explain to the passengers what had happened, and the consequence was a panic and a universal frantic rush over a very uncomfortable hedge into a potato field. Luckily there was not sufficient light to disclose the embarrassment in which the owners of crinolines must have been plunged in their passage over the high bushes. I am bound to say the *invalides* in my carriage showed remarkable agility in reaching *terra firma*, and scrambled through the hedge with astonishing alacrity, while I conducted my retreat in a more orderly manner, having first, with a fiendish satisfaction, let down both windows.

This respite, however, was soon at an end, for the night air drove my fugitives back, and, as a matter of course, up went the windows; so that by the time we moved on, we had been for ten minutes at least again inhaling and respiring one another's

breath. This state of things was somewhat aggravated by an accident which befel the bulkiest of my male tormentors, who chose to take a pinch of snuff while standing up to arrange something for the lady in whom he was interested. By some extraordinary maladroitness he upset his snuff-box—and that not a little one—over the head and dress of his soul's idol, who forthwith shook herself, and sent such volumes of the offending powder into every corner and cranny of the carriage that there was nothing but coughing, sternutation and emunctory movements for the next half hour.

At seven A.M. we reached Lyons, and one of my fellow passengers alighted. At Avignon the pretty invalid, her attendant doctor, and another lady cleared out, and the others at Rognac. I fell into conversation with one of this last trio, and found him a very agreeable and well-informed man. Oddly enough he had with him a volume of pamphlets on the Pársís and on Persia, which he had put together and which he presented to me, with his card. The name was Edouard de la Baume. He was going into the mountains to finish a work on

the "Civilization of Christianity," of which he promised me a copy, and I take this opportunity of reminding him of his promise. On one point I differed with him, and still differ: he hoped to see all England Catholic, and believed it would be so.

"Marseilles is considered by many," says Bradshaw, "as the finest city of France."

For my part I dissented *in toto* from this opinion, my nature being so constituted that I have no enjoyment of the higher senses while that of smell is outraged. The Stygian mud of the harbour here would make it impossible to admire the greatest architectural beauties in the city, did they exist. Now what quality does the poet cite first when he would speak of beauty? Is it not cleanliness, *simplex munditiis,* which I would render "simply neat?" Nay, the Latins summed up all the beauties of creation in the one word *mundus,* "clean." Seriously speaking, there are deep senses in that worship of purity. The Magians adored the pure in their sun-worship, and we do not read that even in presence of the Highest, their offerings of pure gold and perfumes were rejected.

I betook me to a spacious, well-furnished room in the Hôtel de Luxembourg, where without air, and without attendance, I counted the weary hours. The bell was tongueless, and like a meek slave replied nothing, even under the most violent treatment. As for the dinner, it was so bad I could not eat it, so I went out and supped wretchedly at the Hôtel des Trois Empereurs, who, if they fared no better than myself, were not to be envied the purple. Late as it was, I drove to the consul's. He was away, and the vice-consul was out, but an English girl, a relative, I suppose, furnished me with a direction I wanted. The number of the house was 34, and my fair informant was very particular in instructing me to say *trente-quatre* to the coachman. "*Trente-quatre*," I could not help exclaiming *sotto voce*, "was ever Secretary of Legation schooled after this fashion? Well! it shows my countrymen are rather deficient in French, or this girl would not think it necessary to translate the numerals."

On the 5th of July, I found myself on board the *Vatican*, a steamer of 280 tons, bound for Messina. I had passed the night in anathematizing

a fiendish crew of invisible tormentors, who devoured me during the darkness, and left me only with the morning light, *necdum satiata*. After a pleasant walk on deck, I had just seated myself, when a shrill noise arose among a party of Italians, who had quarrelled about something. Turning to the person next me, I asked if he knew what was the matter. He looked round and said, "I think I have seen your face before." I asked him where. "At the India Office, where you introduced me to Sir C. Wood. My name is Doria." In fact, by a curious coincidence, it was the very man whose appointment in Persia I was going to fill. Thus I enjoyed the advantage of several long talks with one *au fait* with Persian matters and society, and also gained an excellent cicerone for my descent of half a day at Genoa. Doria is a scion of the princely Genoese family of that name, and speaks Italian like a native. In 1841, he was appointed student attaché, alias *jeune de langue*, at Constantinople. Four such appointments were to be made, and Doria, who was then a student at Cambridge, had one. Oxford sent the Hon. Percy Smythe, now Lord Strangford, to

fill up another; and Mr. Alison, from Malta, and Almeric Wood, from Winchester, whose early promise was cut short by death, were the other two. The Russians are much talked of as linguists, but few Russian missions could produce such linguists as Mr. Alison and Lord Strangford. Mr. Doria, too, is an extremely good linguist; so that the experiment succeeded well.

We reached Genoa at 10 A.M., and I had time to visit the palaces Spinola, Doria, and Brignole, the Cathedral and the Church of the Annunciation. Returning at 5 P.M. we found the steamer crowded with people going to Livorno, which we reached at 4 A.M. on the 7th, and at six o'clock I and Doria went ashore and breakfasted on delicious red mullets at the Hôtel du Nord. Here the rule is to show the worst rooms first, which is politic, for if these be disposed of, customers are easily found for the good ones. As soon as I had breakfasted, I walked to see the statue of Ferdinand the First, around the pedestal of which are the figures of four Moors admirably executed. At half-past eight I took the train to Pisa. The ticket-taker cheated me out of a small sum, but

as the train was just starting there was no time for altercation. Doria, however, espoused my cause warmly and swore most classically in choice Italian. The sights at Pisa are not numerous, but are real lions, indeed. The carving in the Battisterio exceeds description; though I confess I was almost as much pleased with the echo, which repeats twenty-five times. I visited, of course, the cemetery and the Duomo, and went up the leaning tower, and then returned to Livorno. The wind was very boisterous, and a chattering Italian who sate opposite me was not a little discomfited by having his hat blown off his head and out of the window. I got off to the steamer at 5 P.M., having left Doria at Livorno. The vessel was now uncomfortably crowded, a "Vatican" as populous and almost as unclean as that described by About, in his famous pamphlet.

At 6 A.M. on Sunday, the 8th, we came to anchor at Civita Vecchia. The water would be beautifully clear here but for filthy man. After searching in vain among my things for a suitable book, I went to the ship's library to see if, peradventure, one might be found

there. I could not, however, discover anything more moral than, for example, the *Crimes Célèbres* of Dumas. The Italians played cards till night, when they betook themselves to the piano and sang songs from various operas! Next morning, at half-past six, we had Ischia and Procida in sight. The beauty of the scenery here increases till Vesuvius is passed. I talked much with Captain C——, of H.M.'s —— Regiment, an Irishman, one of the most powerful men I have ever seen. His height is just six feet, but his frame is like that of the Farnese Hercules, with prodigiously muscular limbs and neck. He can hold out 56 lb. in his hand with a straight arm, run ten miles an hour, and walk fifty miles a day without fatigue! Talking of St. Helena and the sharks there, he said that when quartered in the island with his regiment, he one day saw a soldier fall into the water from a rather high rock, and perceived in a moment that the man could not swim. Being a first-rate swimmer himself, he immediately jumped in and struck out towards the man. After taking a few strokes, he remembered that a very large shark had been constantly seen just about that particular place,

and his horror was great when, a few moments afterwards, he distinctly saw, in the clear water, a monstrous ground-shark rising up from the depth. Though a brave man, he felt a cold electric shock through his whole frame at the prospect of a terrible death so near. Luckily, however, he swam on, making as much splashing as he could. The shark rose three times close to him, but, deterred by the noise he made in the water, did not attempt to seize him, and he succeeded in reaching the soldier and in bringing him to land, but too late, for life was extinct.

At half-past eight on the morning of the 9th, we anchored in the Bay of Naples. Two French men-of-war entered the bay with us, saluted by the forts—a greeting to which the gigantic three-decker of the French admiral thundered forth a response. Shortly after our anchor had descended, a naval officer came from the —— man-of-war to ask for letters. He was a fine, handsome fellow, but could not speak nor understand one word of French.

The captain of the *Vatican* asked me to explain

to him that there were no letters, which I did. In return he volunteered to me a sad account of the English sailors at the station. He said they were a raw set, entirely ignorant of their duty, and not much disposed to learn it. The French ships, he said, were larger than ours, better manned, and, in the event of war, would certainly capture the English. In his opinion, France had become a greater naval power than England, and the sooner the fact was known the better.

This discourse grated harshly and painfully on my ears. I repeat it, because I think—though some steps have been taken in the right direction—much remains to be done to keep up an adequate supply of experienced sailors for our navy. My own confidence in the English sailor is such, that I believe, under all disadvantages, he will win. But why weight him at all in the race for victory? why send ships to sea manned almost entirely with landsmen?

I had agreed to go ashore with a Neapolitan gentleman returning from Russia, but as his pass did not come I had to land by myself.

I drove first to the English Legation, and thence

to the S. Francesco di Paolo, the church of the Jesuits, the Jesuit monastery, and then to the Duomo, built by Charles the First of Arragon, in 1272. Here, beneath the high altar is the confessional of San Gennaro, built by Cardinal Almiero Carafa, in 1497. The remains of St. Januarius are under the altar. The chapel they believe to have been built on a temple to Apollo, of which some fragments remain. I then passed hurriedly through the rooms of the Musée, and so to a hotel, took a warm bath, and returned to the steamer.

We started at 3 P.M. with a fresh breeze, which drooped to a calm as soon as we got out of sight of land. Presently a large shoal of fish showed themselves near the vessel, jumping out of the water, and among them I descried the dorsal fin of a good-sized shark. It has been said that there are no sharks in the Mediterranean. There was certainly no mistake about this shark, for I pointed it out to Captain C——, the hero of the story about the soldier at St. Helena, recounted above, and he recognized the felon of the deep at once.

Legions of fleas at night, and the ceaseless chat-

tering and patriotic odes of the Italians by day, rendered rest impossible. Garibaldi being in the spring-tide of his successes, the enthusiasm of his compatriots on board the *Vatican* flamed forth in a perpetual song of triumph, quite maddening to the placid temperament of the Anglais. I rejoiced to find myself, two hours before noon, at beautiful Messina, shining out from under its amphitheatre of hills, many of them terraced to the very summits. Here I was to change to the *Borysthène*, the steamer which was to carry me to Constantinople. I shook hands with the acquaintances I had made on board the *Vatican*. One of them, an American said,—

"Good-by, stranger, guess we shall meet again some day, Prime Minister and President."

With aspirations somewhat less lofty, I descended into the boat, and found myself with a Queen's messenger and G—— of the diplomatic service, a very clever fellow, and first-rate linguist. He speaks French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese admirably, and is blessed with a constitution of iron and a perpetual flow of spirits. On going to the Consul's, we were told that three columns of Gari-

baldi's men were on the march to attack Messina. Thereupon we repaired to a hotel and drank some tolerably good Lacryma Christi to their success. At 3 P.M. we embarked in the *Borysthène*, which proved to be a paradise of comfort and cleanliness in comparison with the *Vatican*. There were but few passengers. Among them was Madame de B——, in love with a certain Russian prince. *En revanche* her husband was in love with an English girl; and Madame invited her to pay her a visit, and smiled and smiled until the time for throwing off the mask arrived, and then—Ay! it was a sad tale; why repeat it?

At 6 A.M. of the 12th I awoke and found myself seemingly so close to Cape Malea that, by a desperate jump, it might have been reached. It is a magnificent marble promontory; high, for fleecy clouds swathed its middle. We soon passed it and Cerigo, and got abreast of Hydra, an island so bare that one wonders human beings can exist upon it. Yet there is a considerable population, chiefly fishermen. At 2 P.M. we came to anchor in the Piræus. The entrance to the harbour seems not to exceed three

hundred feet, and is invisible a little way off. About a score of vessels of respectable dimensions were lying in the port, which, though small, is at least perfectly sheltered and safe. "And this is Greece—this barren, burnt-up, dusty soil is the land of the olive and the grape, of Pallas Athene, of Theseus, Socrates, Alcibiades, and Plato—this trumpery bagatelle of a port is renowned Piræus, and that dry ditch the famed Ilissus! Ye Gods! it is too bad—was ever such a dead take in!"

Such was my inward ejaculation as I gazed about me in blank disappointment. The impression still remains so strong in my mind, that I must pause here and gulp down my feelings, which, however, will, I am sure, show themselves in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Athens, and how it impressed me—Myth of Xerxes and his Invasion —Along the Winding Dardanelles—Constantinople—Therapia —Sultán Abdúl Majíd—Rumours of impending Massacres—Chit-chat—The Turkish Bath—First Lesson in Turkish.

On landing, I and G——, and the Queen's messenger, got into a miserable hack vehicle, which resembled nothing so much as a pigsty taken to pieces, and knocked together again in the shape of a hackney coach. The road was bad, dusty and full of holes, and with every jerk our miserable cage opened at all parts, the doors flying open, and the bottom threatening to fall out. The jades of ponies that drew us were almost skeletons, and the numerous other jades we met, for there is much traffic of a beggarly kind upon the road, seemed in little better condition. One might have fancied oneself in the Enfer to which bad horses go for their

sins. The intense heat jumped well with this notion, as did also the circumstance that on coming to a halt half way to Athens, we were offered for the quenching of our thirst a beverage that resembled turpentine in taste and smell. In an hour we reached Sir T. Wyse's house, which is small, but in good taste. Here we dismissed our voiture with five francs, and anathemas five times five, and walked to the house of Mr. Eliot, the chargé d'affaires, Sir T. Wyse being away. This was close to the palace, with a view of the Acropolis to the south, and of Mount Hymettus to the north. But can one feed one's fancy always on Hymettus? I trow not, and so evidently thought D——, one of the attachés, who was seated at the open window, dolefully thrumming a guitar. I never did rescue a poor famished wanderer from an uninhabited island, but imagination tells me the look of one so rescued would be very much that of the unfortunate diplomate at Athens, to whom kind chance has brought a visitor, a *merops* from the mother country, ignorant of modern Greek, and willing to conceal all knowledge of the classics for the time being.

After delivering our despatches, which turned out to be three letters for the mission and a big box for a dissenting clergyman (the Greek servant said it was not for the chaplain, whose name, Hill, he pronounced in a fashion scarcely agreeable to ears polite), we, and the Athenian mission, all there was of it, got into a vehicle several degrees superior to that which brought us, and started for the steamer. A pleasant breeze had sprung up, and the return trip was more agreeable than our former journey. Still, like Smelfungus, I was in the sulks, and could not help expressing my disappointment at this belauded capital of Pallas. "The Acropolis is picturesque," quoth I, "but not half so much so as scores of hill forts in India. Hadrian's arch might be thought a neat entrance to a gentleman's park in England. As for the Ilissus, it is like nothing so much as a canal for towing barges, with no barges to tow, and the water turned into mud. The temple of Jupiter alone somewhat approaches the grand."

The real fact is, young Europe is whipped and schooled into admiration of Greece, till no one dares give a candid opinion. Otherwise, how can men in

their senses affect to believe all that stuff about the invasion of Xerxes. Did not Firdausi, the Persian Homer, who died so long back as A.D. 1014, collect in his Shahnamah the ancient historical legends and traditions of his country? How comes it that there is no mention of this war of Xerxes, or even of Xerxes himself, in that poem? Well might the old bard of Tús exclaim, like Lysimachus, when the history of Alexander was read to him, "These exploits of the Greeks are very fine, but where were we when they happened?" One hundred and seventy myriads of foot soldiers, not to speak of cavalry, sailors, and sutlers, says the chronicle of *Græcia Mendax*, followed the son of Atossa to Greece. Why what a sorry jade is this boasted Civilization of to-day, that can scarce send ten myriads from France and England to the Crimea, when Barbarism, that grand old sorceress, moved with millions in her train! Millions —ay, five millions, two hundred and eighty-three thousand, two hundred and twenty males—we won't stickle about the women and children—formed the camp of the great king. Or, to put it another way, London and Paris made a little tour from the Caspian

to Corinth, and every day fifty Brightons were founded afresh all along the periphery of the Ægean. Truly, this tempts one to exclaim, "Vive tousjours Pantagruel!" How much simpler to suppose that the Great King sent a satrap to punish the Athenians, that Greece put on her poetical spectacles to look at the fight, and manufactured Xerxes out of *Khsháyathiya* (the king).

By the time I had given vent to my disappointment in such effusions as the above, we were on board the steamer in time for a late dinner. People were talking about the prodigious impression Prince Alfred had made on the Greeks in his recent visit. *On disait* that the Ionian Islands and Venice would be erected into a principality for him. The Ionian nobility, being of Venetian descent—Dandolas, Dorias, and so forth—made this wear a better colour. The Greeks, it was argued, did not care for the Ionians, and would not annex the Seven Islands if they could.

At 6 P.M. on the 13th we were running beside Tenedos, and an hour and a half afterwards we entered the Dardanelles. The setting sun gilded the mountains in the west, and the lighthouses at

the mouth of the straits flamed up. A balmy breeze came from the land. I sate with G—— in the fore watching the beautiful and shifting scenery, the shoals of porpoises, and long flights of birds resembling the snipe, which the superstitious here say cannot be shot. It was truly a delicious evening.

Half an hour before noon on the 14th we came to anchor at Constantinople. The approach to this grand city and the city itself are—to be seen, not described. An ocean river, from five to sixty miles broad, winds between shores of matchless beauty up to quays where merchants of all nations land. A strong current of not less than four miles an hour sweeps vessels down from the Black Sea to Stamboul, and from Stamboul, "the city of Islám," to the Ægean. But this sea-river has its disadvantages. Such is the rush of the stream that, when a vessel anchors, she is whirled furiously about, and in storms it is impossible to cross from shore to shore. At all times there is danger in such a current, and many an uncared-for human being perishes in the Bosphorus. Not long before I arrived a boat, which carried a pasha, whose heart was merry with the forbidden juice, encountered

a steamer and sank instantly, and the Turks passed from the wine-cup to the Bridge of Sirát.

I and G—— and the Queen's messenger were soon ashore. A filthy, hot walk of a mile took us from the quay to Misseri's Hotel, which is clean and comfortable, with neither bugs nor fleas—no slight recommendation in this land of the "blood-drinkers." Some affectionate fleas, however, who had contracted a liking for me on board the steamer, refused to leave me, and accompanied me to the hotel.

After lunching we walked back over mud, sharp stones, and heaps of garbage, through snarling dogs and jostling natives, to the quay. Here we took a kaik with three rowers, and, tumbling in the sack of despatches, started at 3 P.M. for Therapia, so called from θεραπεύω, to heal, the air being beneficial in the hot weather. There was a fresh breeze, the unfathomable water boiled with a strong current, and I, being but a poor swimmer, was just thinking how easily our frail barque might tip us into the azure, sunny death that laughed beneath, when suddenly a Black Sea steamer came up behind us.

She was full of passengers, and among them were many Circassians, with tall black caps like those of our Grenadiers. Our boatmen let our boat go bump against the stern of the steamer as she passed, and then fouled a boat she was towing. At the same time they set up a diabolical yell, which woke up sharp my two friends, who had gone off in a siesta, and by no means gratified myself, as I thought the bungling Turks would very likely upset us.

However, the gentlemen savages—our boatmen—only meant to make fast and be towed. This being accomplished, we swirled along in the wake of the steamer to the Embassy at Therapia, where P—— shook his head and said the towing was *contra legem*, as two or three accidents had happened from it, and the despatches might be lost; a possibility which very naturally appeared to him much more terrible than that of the submersion of the despatch bearers.

This visit to Therapia completed my view of the panorama of Constantinople, a panorama so often described and so impossible to realize from any word-painting. Entering from the Sea of Marmora, you

pass, on the right, a number of small islands, one of which has been purchased by Sir Henry Bulwer. On the left appears Stamboul proper, the ancient and Muslim part of the city of Constantinople. As you advance, a large old crumbling fort is passed, succeeded by a long line of houses. The shore then makes a deep indenture northwards, and you come to the famous mosques, the Mahmudiyah, and Sulaimániyah, and St. Sophia. Beyond these stood, till the disastrous fire of the last few months, the Sarai Burnú, the palace of the sultans. You have now reached a deep curving indenture like the mouth of a great river. It is the Golden Horn, the port of all nations. The aspect of the city thus far from the sea is charming. The buildings are beautiful in themselves, and the rich green of gardens and fine cypresses adds indescribably to the effect. On the Asian shore, right opposite the Golden Horn, Scutari presents itself, where an immense barrack and an hospital, built for the French troops in the Crimean war, stand forth conspicuous. There are several such buildings, empty and deserted,—emblems, it may be said, of the hollow triumphs of a half-

finished struggle. The city now grows along the shore of the Golden Horn, the deep bay that parts Stamboul from the European quarter. Right in the centre of the curve which forms the eastern portal of the Horn, is the custom-house. You are abreast of Galata. There is the landing-place whence you pass to Pera, to Misseri's Hotel, to the Russian or the British Embassy. Your eye mounts to them, to the great square English building, erected, as was fitting, by Smith, and having all the *solidité* of the national character. The Russian palace has also its characteristics. It is vast and imposing, and of the appropriate colour, yellow, significant, some might say, of envy, malice, and other ill-feelings. The eye now travels over Top-Kháneh, the quarter of the arsenal, to two vast warehouses, built by pashas, and beyond them to the Sultan's new palace of Dolmabaghchih and Beshiktásh, and so on to the beautiful kiosk of Rashíd Pasha, and many other enchanting buildings. At length the sweet bay of Bibek is reached, and then the twin towers of the Rumili Hisár, the fortress where Mahmúd the Great first landed in 1461. Opposite this, on the Asian

shore, is the Anatoli Hisár and the famed valley of Göksu, or "Sweetwaters," a lovely spot where Turkish beauties now show their features to the Káfir; still further on, past the villages of Therapia and Buyukdereh, on the European shore, and the Genoese castle, on the opposite side, the beauty of the scene does not diminish, till the Black Sea is reached with its mist and storms. There roll up the scroll!

The day after my arrival at Constantinople, being Sunday, I walked to the Embassy Chapel, which was but three parts full. The intense heat explained, perhaps, the scanty attendance. Prayers were read by a converted Arab, and a Scotch missionary preached. After service I spoke to the clergyman about the Memorial Church.

"You see," he said, "even this chapel is not full, and it is thought Russia will soon gain the ascendancy here, in which case the Greek Church will not allow of missionaries from the West, or heretical worship; so the committee in London are thinking of founding a hospital, or something of the kind."

On the 17th I was joined by a Persian, or rather Kurdish servant, who had gone from Tehran to London with an English gentleman, and falling sick of the *maladie du pays*, eagerly caught at a proposal to return with me. Rahim, or "the merciful," so was my henchman named, an exceedingly muscular man, an inch or two above the middle height, although he tried hard to look as if butter would not melt in his mouth, reminded me forcibly of a Thug I had seen in India, whose expression had stereotyped itself in my memory. Rahim's features were handsome and his manners bland, but somehow you felt sure the knife he had about him was not used only for eating his dinner with. In fact his early education had not gone beyond the precept, "Thou shalt smite thine enemies and plunder all men." The practice in Kurdistan strictly accords with the said rule, and Rahim had his first practical lesson in this doctrine at seven years old, when some Kurdish gentlemen of the neighbourhood entered his paternal mansion and murdered his father at prayers. They then packed up all that was portable and departed with it, after stabbing

Rahim himself and some others of the family. Rahim recovered from his wound and grew up strong and daring. Hereupon the gentlemen, who had murdered his father—one or two of them had meanwhile met with accidents and had ceased to be troublesome—offered a Kurdish maiden to Rahim as a wife, to compound for their misdeeds. Rahim thought it expedient to appear to acquiesce in this, until he could save up money enough to buy an order for the trial of the assassins, and it was in my service that he realized the requisite sum. Rahim knew a little English, just enough indeed to lead to awkward blunders. I always talked Persian with him, but, one day, as I wanted an *Irish stew*, I asked him if he knew what it was. "Of course," said he, with rather a self-sufficient snort, "I know,—*Aristu* (Aristotle) was a great philosopher, and the friend of Aflátún (Plato)."

Rahim's knowledge of Turkish, however, was really useful to me, and as soon as he had come I made him escort me to a Turkish bath. I expected something very luxurious, but was greatly disappointed. The bath I went to was called that of Aghá Ján. It

turned out to be just the hour for the women, and there was only one man in the place, a Greek, who was taking a siesta. The Hammámchí, however, said there was time enough to finish me off before the ladies arrived, so I undressed in an upper room, threw a linen cloth over myself, and walked on a pair of high wooden clogs to the bath-room. It was terribly hot, and there was a vapour in it such as might be expected from a caldron, in which a thousand skins, and those none of the cleanest, had simmered for hours. Two most unpleasant-looking striplings entered the room with me, and signed to me to sit on a cloth in a corner, close to a receptacle for hot water. They then soaped, scrubbed, and soused me till I nearly fainted. The hot-water over the head was peculiarly disagreeable. At last I escaped from the detestable place and got upstairs, was shampooed, and drank some coffee. By this time a number of women began to arrive, and did not seem to be at all disturbed by my presence, insomuch that I could hardly get out of the place before they, too, commenced operations.

On the evening of the 17th I went down to

Therapia to spend a day or two with Sir H. Bulwer. Nothing can be imagined worse than the road which leads to the bridge from which the steamers start for Therapia, except the bridge itself, which is full of clefts, rifts, and protuberances, and blends the unsightly with the useless in a manner to satisfy even a Turk. On arriving at Therapia I found Sir Henry had gone to Stamboul about the burial of an Armenian, a convert from the Catholic faith to Protestantism. This man, being a puzzle-headed fellow, desired, notwithstanding his lapse, to be buried in the Catholic cemetery. To this the Catholics objected, so the corpse was left on the ground, while the dispute went on. As the conversion had been made by an American missionary, the American minister took a strong interest in the affair, and accompanied Sir Henry to get it settled. The Patriarch, however, held out stoutly, and refused to allow the interment; a mob of some three thousand Armenians assembled and the excitement was considerable, but next day the man was buried in spite of the mob, who spate on the grave, and called out, "Down with the English." Sir Henry, I was

told, showed great energy and firmness, and disposed of a troublesome and awkward affair very skilfully.

The massacres at Damascus and in the Lebanon had now caused a wide-spread feeling of anxiety among all classes of Christians in the East. There was something like a panic at Constantinople. The Russians were busy making capital out of these untoward occurrences. "Look," said their emissaries, "at these Turks in their true character. The English and French did well to save these merciless savages and bolster up their rule over a Christian population. Observe their gratitude. They came in with the sword, have governed with it all along, and will go out with the knife." A Muhammadan population is always dangerous when a religious cry is raised, and it is not to be supposed, because all passed off quietly at Stamboul during the Syrian disturbances, that there was no real danger at the capital. The gunpowder was there, but the spark did not reach it—*voilà tout!* In consequence of the excited state of the Muhammadans, I was advised not to go to Tehran by the direct route of

Trebisonde and Erzeroum, which lies through Turkish territory, but to take the more circuitous road by Poti and Teflis, which passes through the dominions of Russia right up to the Persian frontier.* In spite of my advisers I should have gone by Trebisonde, had not Prince Labanoff, the Russian ambassador, given me an introduction to Monsieur B——, an aide-de-camp of Prince Bariatinski, the viceroy of the Caucasus, who was to start shortly for Teflis. This gentleman is always deputed to conduct ambassadors and other foreigners of rank through the Caucasus, and the advantage of having such a companion decided me on going by Poti.

By this arrangement I obtained a fortnight's additional rest in Constantinople, and to make the most of my time I commenced Turkish and engaged a Turkish teacher. My effendi was a tall lean man, more anxious to handle the piastres of the infidel than, as the Yankees would say, to "fix" him as a linguist. At our first interview he demanded whether I intended to read on Adínah (Friday). I said I did, but that I supposed he would want on that day to go

* The stages by the two routes will be found in Appendix I.

to the mosque. He said it was *lázim*, "incumbent on him," to do so, but that getting money was *lázimtar*, "more incumbent." I then told him I should not study on Sunday. "Oh!" said he, "if you do not read on Sunday, neither will I on Friday." "You are quite right," I replied, "in obeying the rules of your creed. I respect you for it, but it would have been better had you shown your first-class ticket at once."

Before leaving Constantinople I had an opportunity of seeing the Sultan and all the principal officers of his court. I had in London assisted, as the French say, at an exhibition of the Turkish courtiers in the costume of the time of the Selims and Solymans. That costume might be briefly described as bolsters twisted round the head, and sheets and shawls round the body. Now things are changed, and I was agreeably surprised to find pashas and eunuchs in rich uniforms. The Sultan was ghastly pale, and, as he rode along between the lines of soldiers, he never once turned his head or gave the slightest sign of vitality, but bent forward to his saddle-bow, looking like a corpse on horseback.

I could not help thinking of Scott's Robert of Paris, and many another noble Crusader, who passed this way to trample down the Crescent, and of their scorn and surprise had they been called on to welcome a brother knight in this cadaverous Soldan. Yet, strange mockery! on this sworn enemy of the Cross, was bestowed the badge of that illustrious order, the giving of which is accompanied with the following words: "*Wear this ribbon about thy neck, adorned with the image of the blessed martyr and soldier of Christ, St. George, by whose imitation provoked, thou mayest so overpass both prosperous and adverse adventures, that having stoutly vanquished thy enemies both of body and soul, thou mayest not only receive the praise of this transient combat, but be crowned with the palm of eternal victory!*"

CHAPTER III.

From Stamboul Eastward ho!—French Steamers in the Black Sea—Sinope—Liaisons dangereuses—Trebisonde—Russian Steamers in the Black Sea—Batoum—Troubles of an Impresario—Poti—Griefs of Madame Jacquot—Habits of the Mingrelians.

JULY of 1860 was flaming itself out on its thirty-and-first day, when I and my *compagnon de voyage*, M. B——, aide-de-camp to the Viceroy of the Caucasus, went on board the *Metidjah*, French steamer, about to start for Trebisonde. Our departure was not without due libations. The Russian, *more suo*, sent round champagne, which was quaffed with great gusto by even our Persian friends, who came to see us off. My libation was an involuntary one, and consisted of a precious case of cognac, intended for a *viaticum*, but which the great brawny porter who bore it, smashed just as I was leaving the quay.

And now we are off, end on at first, and then drifting broadside athwart a tier of other vessels, while Frenchmen, Turks, and divers barbarians are swearing unintelligible oaths, and vainly endeavouring to accomplish the rounding of the vessel. At last the feat is performed, we steam merrily on, the sky is bright, the scenery glorious, and only man is vile. But, sad to say, this vileness of man outweighs all the beauties of creation. The decks are crowded with an unclean rabble of pilgrims, among and across whom it is impossible to move. The holy fleas, imported from Mecca by these worthies, have likewise acquired migratory habits, and are gifted with most mundane appetites. It is impossible to exist on deck. The cabins are hot to suffocation. Nathless, we so endure, and at six P.M. are in the Black Sea, and begin to ask ourselves an explanation of these steamers, manned by Frenchmen, but built in England, and worked at first by English companies. How comes it that Austrians, French, and Russians monopolize the traffic of the Euxine? How comes it that Englishmen should have abandoned to others this province

of Britannia's natural empire? Be the answer what it may, the fact is regrettable, for England has thus lost, and France gained a nursery for hardy seamen. The general passenger, *too*, suffers by the transfer. The decks of these French steamers are seldom washed, and the food is execrable. Our dinner, for example, consisted of watery soup, stale lobsters, and a series of bad pickles, with *thrushes* for game, washed down with *piquette à faire grincer les dents.*

At 5 P.M., of August the 1st, we reached the small town of Ineboli, where numerous natives disembarked, and were succeeded by a like number, with rags and fleas in proportion. At midnight we entered, by the light of a glorious moon, the famed harbour of Sinope, rendered dangerous by two rocks about a quarter of a mile from the shore. Vessels pass between these and a high bluff which forms the south side of the port. Here, of course, there ought to be a light, and the Turkish Government had got as far as to entertain the idea of having one. The harbour is safe from all but northerly gales. A French doctor, who came on board, said the trade was decaying, and he declared that not

long before fifty Greek families had emigrated to Russia.

At 5 P.M., next day, August the 2nd, we reached Samsun, low and unhealthy, but dignified till lately with a vice-consul, who is said to have made twenty thousand pounds in the Crimean war. The place is of some importance as being half-way between Trebisonde and Stamboul, and the spot where travellers going Stamboulwards from Baghdad and Diyarbekir embark. A certain functionary here was obliged to fly in consequence of having formed a *liaison* with a Turkish girl. These intrigues directly or indirectly lead to half the troubles which take place between European Governments and those of Turkey and Persia. A French gentleman on board told me several stories of the kind. He said that on one occasion an *émeute* took place at Erzeroum on account of a Turkish girl being found in the house of a European. The Turks went *en masse* to put the offenders to death, but were brought to a halt by a slight shock of an earthquake, which they interpreted as Heaven's veto on their proceedings. "Let the infidel live," said they, "his time is not yet

come; when it arrives, if it please God, we will kill him." The same person told some curious anecdotes of our Oriental *employés*, and these strengthened an opinion I had already come to, that the English Government does wrong to bestow so many responsible appointments on Levantines and half-breeds. These men have not the feelings of Englishmen, and cannot be expected to be patriotic towards a country which pays them, indeed, but is not the land of their birth, or their residence.

"*Que diable*," said the Frenchman, "does your Government mean by letting its functionaries masquerade as kayikjis on the Bosphorus? But if they dress like boatmen, they need not talk like them. I desired to present a friend one day to M. ——, and I said: 'Excellence! permit me to present M. ——.' He replied: '(Regrettable hiatus).' I thought my ears deceived me, so I said once more: 'Excellence, I have the honour to present Monsieur ——.' He said: 'J'ai dit (vide supra); est-ce assez?'"

At 5 A.M., on the 3rd of August, we anchored at Trebisonde. The scene is most picturesque. The town rises in an amphitheatre, up the side of a

beautiful hill, bright with cypresses. A bold rock, on which is a fort, bisects the town and projects into the sea. A harbour of refuge might be formed and is much required, for there is no safe port all along the coast. No sooner was the anchor down than all the Turkish passengers made for the shore, with a noise and confusion quite astounding. The English consul, Mr. Frank Stevens, with his usual courtesy and hospitality, sent off a boat for me and made me welcome at his house. His children speak Turkish, modern Greek, Italian, French, and English with equal facility, and fairly put me to shame by their attainments. At 1 P.M. we called on the Russian consul, who was just going to be married, a fact which, perhaps, accounted for his extremely high spirits, and his smiling at every word that was said, even when the subjects spoken of were of the most mournful description. We then transferred my *impedimenta* from the *Metidjah* to the *Emperor Alexander*, a Russian steamer, which by its cleanliness and comfort formed a complete contrast to the French vessel. The captain, a captain-lieutenant in the Russian navy, has the reputation of being a very

smart officer. He had served in the Crimean war, of which he spoke regretfully, and said the English had destroyed the Russian fleet, but had done no good to Turkey, nor to any one. I could see that the Russian steamers are manned in a way to make them useful in case of another rupture. We then went on board the *Adrienne*, a Turkish corvette, carrying eighteen 32-pounders and two traversing 68-pounders. It was a fine vessel and well kept, but not at its best, as the Turks do not clean decks on Friday, their day of rest. Several sailors were lying ill of the Samsun fever. We went down in the powder-room. A sentinel with a drawn sword is posted there always. On returning to shore we enjoyed a good gallop up to the ruins of a Genoese castle. Having no musquito curtains, I avoided my couch as long as possible, and shuddered as I extinguished my light. Trebisonde is the land of the scorpion and rat, creatures which rather interfere with pleasant slumber. The musquitoes, too, made havoc of my nose. In winter, however, the climate of Trebisonde is delicious, and these pests are less active. The shooting is then capital, and woodcocks are so numerous that no one cares to eat them.

The *Emperor Alexander* steamed away from Trebisonde at half-past nine on the night of the 4th of August, and reached Batoum at 6 A.M. on the 5th. Batoum is a village of about thirty houses, a beautiful spot as regards scenery, but a hot-bed of fever and malaria. It is important, as being the only haven, a small one indeed, on the eastern coast of the Euxine. On that account the Russians were anxious to retain it, but lost it, they say, by a quibble, and a mistake in the spelling of a word. The little bay, which might hold some five ships, but is capable of improvement and enlargement, trends towards the south-east. The houses are on the right, as you look shorewards; that of the Russian Vice-Consul being in the centre. The whole row to the left of his house was shut up and deserted at the time of my visit, on account of fever. On the opposite shore gleamed forth from among the trees a very desirable-looking mansion of a Mingrelian landholder. The heat was tremendous, and I thought it prudent to decline the vice-consul's invitation to dinner; but I went to tea in his small, but pretty garden, swarming with musquitoes. The poor Russian was very

desponding, and seemed to be working himself into a fever by anticipation.

It being Sunday, there was a great deal of singing and music on board the steamer. The *troupe* for the Opera-House at Teflis formed the larger portion of the passengers, and they played and sang Italian airs for hours. I must confess, however, I was more pleased with the simple songs of the Russian sailors. There was a very fine tenor among them, and their performance would have been applauded anywhere. As for the Italian actresses, being in no fear of any public, they gave full vent to their natural high spirits, and laughed, quaffed, quarrelled, and gesticulated in a surprising manner. The prima donna, a damsel with Herculean limbs, and a volcanic temper, kept all around her in awe. The hapless impresario was held responsible for the flavour of every dish at table, for the *désagrémens* of the voyage, and even for the heat of the weather. He seemed to be the most good-natured of men, and I could not help sympathizing with him, as he sate with streaming brow in the intense heat, vainly endeavouring to keep peace among the ladies.

I had a long talk with the captain, a fine sailor-like fellow. He discoursed in a most liberal strain on politics, said that Russia had no right to Poland, much less to Turkey. "Every people," said he, "ought to govern themselves, but the Turks ought to be chased out of Europe for their cruel oppression of the Christians, and because they are Asiatics."

We left Batoum at 1 A.M. on the 6th of August, and reached Poti at 5 P.M. Anything less inviting than the aspect of this place can hardly be imagined. The shore is so low that it may be said to be level with the water. It is, in fact, a muddy swamp, fringed with reeds. A sea rising in fury at the first hoarse whisper from the wind; marsh fever along a line of jungle eighty miles in breadth; intense heat; myriads of musquitoes, fleas, and other insect pests—such are some of the attractions which Poti offers to its guests. The river Rhion, which is about fifty yards across, comes straight out to the sea, and is, as it were, snipped off from it by a low spit of land, running at right angles across its mouth. At low tide there is a small island at the river's mouth, which makes an apology for a delta. Ships lie about

half a mile from shore, and can have no communication with it if the weather be at all rough, but if it be fine, a pigmy steamer comes out to unload them. Nothing can be more inconvenient, and indeed were it desirable to attempt developing the trade of this region, the best plan would be to construct a road to Batoum, and make that the port for the Rhion. The consent of the Turkish Government would, however, be necessary. The steamer that came out for us kept us waiting nearly two hours. It was crammed to excess with people going from Poti to the Crimea and Odessa. Among them were the ladies of the vice-governors of Mingrelia and Erivan, with a prince, whose name I could not catch, A. D. C. to the viceroy, escorting the said ladies; a Mingrelian prince, dressed like a Circassian; crowds of Cossacks, Bashkirs, Mingrelians, Russians, and others, whom I regret to say I included at the time under the general head of filthy miscreants.

These, with a few pretty girls of the peasant order, and quantities of most unclean baggage, were disgorged upon the deck of the *Alexander*, till there was no space to turn. We breakfasted at eleven

o'clock, and were most unfairly made to pay extra for the meal, as though we had been stopping on our own account. I sate next a Russian lady, the picture of dyspepsy, but very ladylike and agreeable. She ate quantities of unripe fruit, caviare, pickles, and other indigestibles, and on my hinting that such was not the diet for invalids, she assured me nothing ever disagreed with her. Hereupon I asked her if she were on a tour of pleasure.

"Oh, no!" she said. "I am so ill that I must go to Odessa, to put myself under a really good doctor."

On this, a little man, who sat near, observed, as though in emulation of her paradox, that the climate of Poti was a very good one.

"Ciel!" exclaimed the invalid: "je n'ai jamais rien entendu de si barbare que ça. C'est le climat le plus affreux du monde."

While this dispute was going on I was admiring the Mingrelian prince, who was really one of the handsomest men I ever saw, and the Circassian dress set off to the utmost advantage his magnificent form. On my remarking to a Russian employé who

sat near me on the beauty of the Mingrelian and his noble bearing, he replied—"C'est vrai, mais il a volé du poisson la semaine passée."

The invalid lady now began to smoke, and I went on deck, when a tall Russian militaire came and talked to me. He abused the Russian Government, and said money was lavished on follies, while works of real utility were starved. I replied—

"Your Government is wise and well-intentioned, but your empire is so vast it is impossible to superintend everything."

While I was wondering whether I had to do with one of those *espions* who, it is said, fasten themselves in Russia on all strangers, M. B—— came up and told me that my friend was a prince, an officer of the Imperial Guard, and a director of a well-known company. We now got into the little steamer and made for the shore. It was so crowded that there was no place to sit down, nor was there any protection from the sun, which baked us unmercifully. On landing we had to walk up half a mile to the hotel, and sheer compassion compelled me to carry all that way the sick child

of one of the *troupe*, who, poor creature! was herself so ill that she could scarce totter on.

The hotel at Poti consists of two low houses, very much like Indian *banglás* of the shabbiest description. Into one of these the ladies of the *troupe* were put, and I and the other males ensconced ourselves in the other. The landlady was Frenchwoman, who came from Teflis under an engagement to keep the hotel for three years. She told me she had been that very morning to entreat that she might be allowed to go, though only one year of her covenant had expired. The authorities refused, and she was bewailing herself and regretting that she had not *la force* to get away. I asked her her name, and she said "Madame Jacquot." As this, if literally interpreted, means "Poll parrot," or "Pug," I must confess it sounded somewhat apocryphally in my ears. Moreover, I had rather an aversion to call out "Poll parrot," when I wanted anything. Still there was no help for it, and "Jacquot!" "Madame Jacquot!" was soon sounding in all directions. It reminded me of two odd French names which led to an *imbroglio* in India. A

high political functionary at the time of the Kábul war was informed that two foreigners were passing through the province under his control, and sent to ask their names. One replied that he was called Mouton, and the other said he was Le Bœuf. The great man was scandalized, and would not believe in the coincidence of "Sheep" and "Ox" travelling together, so sent and arrested them until, with much difficulty, it was ascertained that they had kept to the letter of their lawful designations.

After vainly essaying a solitary game at billiards as a *passe-temps*, I spoke to an Italian, who was eating his breakfast with a most rueful countenance. He said he was an employé of Government and agent for the delivery of parcels. The value of this announcement was somewhat impaired by his adding that his house had been broken into and pillaged that morning. On my speaking to the landlord about this, he said it was "*très peu de chose*, rien qu'un petit pistolet, un sac de voyage, et quelques paquets." Evidently he thought no robbery worth mentioning unless there was a good haul. He said his hotel was safe, and that of the agent a long way

off and more exposed. "Nevertheless," said he, "as there are some bad characters about, I will, when you go out, lock your door and put the key in my pocket." Having received this assurance I lay down for an hour or two, and had the satisfaction of discovering that my bed had but few bugs in it. On the other hand, it was somewhat of a drawback that it smelt insufferably, and that the fleas were more numerous than the sand on the sea-shore.

At 5 P.M. I got up, and on inquiring for M. B——, I was told that he had gone to bed at the house of a friend. On going down to him he said he felt very ill, and had a slight *coup de soleil.* I then inquired for his friend, and learned that he had just been seized with fever, and on looking about me I discovered him stretched on the floor in a corner, in a violent paroxysm. This did not look promising, but, after drinking some delicious tea served in tumblers, I went on to the custom-house and got all my boxes, unopened. I next recovered my passport and went to the commandant of the station, a colonel of marine, to whom I delivered a

letter from Prince Labanoff. On reading it he promised me horses for the eighty-four versts to Marand, the water in the river being too low to admit of my going by boat. On my return I paid another visit to M. B——, and in spite of his illness asked him to dinner at the hotel. He declared he was too unwell to eat, but, nevertheless, accepted the invitation, and, being naturally of a vigorous constitution, managed to drink a bottle of Bordeaux and three glasses of brandy and water, and to partake of every dish that was brought to table. After this he smoked an infinite number of cigarettes, and went away in improved health and much pleased with his entertainment.

The broiling heat of the day was succeeded by tremendous squalls and heavy rain at night. I was awakened on the morning of the 7th by Hope, with her rainbow pinions, pointing out that there would probably be a flood sufficient for the pigmy steamer to ascend the river, also by some insect that was endeavouring to ensconce itself in my ear. I paid my bill, which was but six roubles and six kopeks, and walked through a pouring rain to the

house of M. Markovich, the agent for the transportation of goods, where M. B—— had taken up his quarters. As it was impossible to ride eighty versts in a deluge, with no change of apparel at the end of the journey, the Cossack horses which had been sent for us were dismissed.

The captain of the little steamer was now summoned and asked if the rain would raise the river to a height or depth which would admit of his vessel's ascending. He shook his head, and said the fall of rain at Poti was not the smallest indication of rain on the hills, which alone had any effect on the navigation. I did not believe him, but the event proved he was right. It rained all day, and at times with tropical violence, but the odious river would not rise even an inch. There was nothing for it but patience, and to pass the time M. Marcovich's assistant, a native of Odessa, educated at Moscow, offered to take me a walk to Palaiostom, or "ancient mouth," of the Rhion, or Phasis.

Accordingly we walked through the pelting rain and up to our knees in mud, to another river, about half a mile off. All round was a dense forest of

low trees about thirty feet high, covered with creepers. A boat was to take us some half a mile farther to the Palaiostom. But the despatch of this boat depended on the will of a Mingrelian landholder, and on sending to him, the reply was that he was asleep, and could not be disturbed. We waited two hours in the hope the great man would awake, and tried to amuse ourselves with fishing. In this, too, we were unsuccessful. We saw, however, numbers of fish of a large size leaping out of the thick, turbid water. They were, we were told, of the Som kind. These are very voracious, and will even seize people when bathing.

It was the very dreariest scene I ever beheld. The rain fell uninterruptedly on the dank matted jungle and the dismal muddy pool; every now and then a fish leaped and fell back with a sullen plunge, the tree frog chirped weirdly, and fever and pestilence brooded over the whole forest. It was the Dismal Swamp in *Dred*. Weary and wet we trudged back to the agent's house, and passed through the whole cantonment—a large, straggling, miserable place. At the farthest end from the sea

were the huts of the *filles publiques*. We saw several soldiers sitting there. After we had returned to the house, the boat of the sleeper came for us, with four rowers. This trifling incident formed a good indication of Mingrelian character. The Mingrelians are always asleep at the time for virtuous action, and awake when they are not wanted, for more incorrigible thieves do not exist anywhere. There is such an innocence—I had almost said honest dignity—in their manner when they are appropriating the goods of another, that one feels, like the benevolent man in Sadi, almost inclined to push something in their way, lest they should be disappointed.

The rest of the day was passed by M. B—— and the other Russians in playing Preference. It is true they played but one game, but it lasted about three hours, and I was heartily sick of looking on. After dinner one of the company launched out into such a harangue against emperors and despots as made me excessively cautious of expressing any opinion at all. The night passed in struggles to avoid suffocation, every door and window being closed

up to shut out the marsh miasma. In these struggles I was greatly aided by the fleas, and other visitors, who prevented me from indulging in a recumbent position for more than a few minutes together, and kept the blood in circulation.

CHAPTER IV.

Poti to Marand—The house of Prince Micadza—Mingrelian Princesses—Marand—Beauty of the Mingrelians—From Marand to Kutais by Teleka—Kutais to Simonette—Simonette to Suram—Suram to Burján—The Conqueror of Schamyl.

AT 8 A.M. on the 8th of August we embarked in the little steamer, in the hope of getting some way up the river. At eleven o'clock, we ran hard aground at a place called Chiladidi, "the large forest," and here, after having accomplished twenty versts by water, we prepared to take to the saddle. We put our things in a long ugly boat without any covering, paid twenty roubles, and commended our kit to the care of my servant Rahim, and to Providence. We ourselves mounted Cossack horses, and, attended by a truculent-looking Cossack with a long spear, set off to ride through the forest. The miserable *troupe* descended from the steamer into a wretched barge with no

covering, where ladies and men sate huddled together with nothing to keep off the blazing sun by day, and the pestilential dews at night. I could not but feel sorry for the poor contralto, who was ill and worn out, and had a sick child to attend to in this horrible region of swamp and fever. My sympathies, however, were soon withdrawn nearer home, and I had, metaphorically speaking, quite enough to do to cool my own porridge, which was scalding hot. The fact is, it is impossible to be more than a few minutes on a Cossack saddle, and on a Cossack horse, without wishing for the skin of a rhinoceros. The saddle is, in fact, two pieces of the hardest wood, with a sharp peak in front, and another behind. If you are of a delicate, effeminate nature, you may put an old rag between yourself and the wood, but having by so doing lost your character for manliness, you still must lose your skin. So mounted, we rode eighteen versts to Prince Micadza, or Michaelson's house. Tired and hungry, my joy was great at arriving, but this feeling was damped at the news that the Prince had not been at this house for a month, that it was empty, and that there was nothing to be had.

M. B—— inclined to ride further on our tired nags, but I was clearly of opinion that by so doing we should fare worse. We accordingly entered the grounds, and passed through some Indian corn to the house, which was built of wood, something in the Chinese fashion, having but one story, but that raised six feet from the ground, no doubt on account of the damp, and with verandahs all round, covered by projecting eaves. Another similar, but smaller, house, and several outhouses stood near. We stepped into the principal room—the other two rooms were bedrooms—and saw two old sofas covered with mouldering chintz, two cane settees, half a dozen chairs, a table, and a mirror. On two pegs hung the coat and shako of the prince proprietor, and before the mirror were suspended his trousers, which were evidently calculated for the fullest possible development of the inner man. The uniform was that of the Cossack regiment of the Guards. There is but one such regiment, though there are a hundred Cossack regiments of cavalry. A very handsome Mingrelian now presented himself as the butler, and, on hearing who we were, declared that the house and

all within it, including himself, were absolutely at our disposal. On this we asked for tea, which was brought in about two hours. About three hours after we got a fowl and some wine of the country, pure juice of the grape, not palatable, but not very unwholesome.

At 11 P.M. we lay down on the sofas, pulling over us, *faute de mieux*, magnificently embroidered counterpanes, thick enough for Russia in the depth of winter, and reposed our heads on vast frouzy pillows, so soft that they immediately closed over our faces, leaving the nose only extant. I had sprinkled Keating's flea-powder most lavishly all about me, and, in spite of the howlings of jackals, was soon asleep.

At 1 A.M. I awoke from a dream that I had been buried up to my neck in an ant-hill, and discovered that the ancestral bugs of Prince Micadza had sent a numerous deputation to wait upon me. Such coarse, black-ribbed gentry I had never beheld before. There was no concealment or scuttling away as with the degenerate London bug, but a dogged Russian tenacity of purpose which made me retreat at once to

the table, where I lay with a lighted candle on each side, on the watch for any fresh assailant. Meantime, my companion, M. B——, whose skin was as tough as that of a buffalo, had nevertheless been dislodged by the enemy from his sofa, and had rolled on to the floor, where he formed a most ludicrous object. Two great pillows hung over him like an avalanche. In his contortions he had twisted the ponderous counterpane tight round his waist, where it rose to a huge mass three or four feet high, while his bare legs projected on the floor. He groaned incessantly, and though asleep, drew up his legs continually, and made convulsive movements with them. The fact was, innumerable fleas were fastening on his legs, while legions of bugs, who were bound up with the counterpane, were making the best use of their opportunities. In order to make sure of the cause of his sufferings, I took a candle, when I saw some bugs, of a size to appal any one, jet-black, and ribbed like what the Scotch call a *sclater*.

At 5 A.M. my companion awoke and dressed, and at 7, as no horses were brought, we set off on foot, to walk to the nearest Cossack station, some two miles off.

Before starting, however, we had another specimen of Mingrelian character. The handsome butler had been so respectful and attentive, that M. B——, after paying for what we had had, made him an unusually large present. In this liberality I quite agreed, and as we walked along I could not help expatiating on the man's singular comeliness, and said that he was exactly what I should imagine was the father of the human race. "Adam had, I suppose," said I, "just such noble features and hyacinthine curls." Just at that moment M. B—— discovered that this type of human beauty had been making free with his pockets, and among other things had abstracted his white silk handkerchief. Never had either of us known so dignified a thief.

After walking half a mile or so, a Cossack came clattering up with two led horses, on which we mounted, and soon came to the Rhion, where we overtook the boats in which were the *troupe*. The contralto showed herself dirty and draggled, and the men were fast sinking to a houseless-poor state, all except the clarionet, who was as clean and brisk as ever. At the station we tried hard to get a change of

horses, as those we had were tired, having been sixty-five versts the day before, and having been caught that morning eight versts off from Micadza's house. However, no change was to be had, so we were obliged to proceed twenty-five versts more with the same horses. After riding eight versts, hunger compelled us to dismount and munch a piece of coarse bread. I had a tin case of preserved meat, which the Cossack hacked with his sword till we got out a little. My companion drank copious draughts of the only water procurable, which was muddy, lukewarm, and had an odious taste; I moistened my lips with it. We then started at a fast trot over some very hard, heavy ground, through a small river and then up a steep bank, and through a wilderness of brushwood close to the edge of the Rhion. The banks were about twenty feet high, and very rotten, so that it was not very safe work. Thus far the forest we passed had been very beautiful, and we came every now and then upon a complete avenue of fine trees, with occasional patches of rich cultivation, whence rose a sweet perfume from some flower or other. We now entered upon a cultivated, but not very picturesque tract.

The most remarkable thing was the beauty of the people. In Mingrelia, an ugly man or woman is a rarity. The boys and girls are lovely, like the best-looking of our English peasants. After riding some distance at best pace, the Cossack came galloping up behind and remonstrated vehemently with M. B—— for knocking up the horses. B—— asked him if he knew to whom he was speaking. He said "No;" but that there was a general order that the horses were not to be pressed. B—— said he would complain to the Governor-General of Kutais about him, and, after a violent altercation, fell to the rear in one of those fits of abstraction which with him always succeeded any excitement.

After going on this way for some time, I set off again at a gallop, which was stopped by B——'s horse shying tremendously at a fishing eagle which rose almost from under his feet. I observed another kind of the same species fishing, but it was curious that we saw no game anywhere, though with such splendid cover all about us. I was now completely knocked up by the great heat and by thirst and hunger, and could hardly reach the station. When I

did, I lay down on a dirty plank in front of the hut, which was too dirty to enter, and presently a heavy shower came on. which wet me to the skin. There was a tolerable house, but that was occupied by the Princess Despéni and the widow of her brother, Prince Malaki of Gouriel, who, like ourselves, were *en route* for Marand. They sent us some cold meat and some very good wine, made at Gouriel, which was served to us in a vast gilt spoon. I drank some wine, but could not eat. Presently the Princess came to see B——. The appearance of herself and her retinue reminded one of the times of Ivanhoe. The Princess was a very handsome woman, about thirty-five, dressed in a black gown with a very long skirt, a tight jacket of black silk, and an odd sort of riding hat. She had many bracelets and jewels, and her train was held up rather ludicrously by a pretty girl about thirteen. There were about thirty retainers wearing the curious Mingrelian hat, which is much the same as that of the Cossacks and Circassians. Some of them had a sort of cap with a very long peak, which can be shifted so as to keep off the sun from the top of the head, or the side or back of it. The principal men were over six

feet high, and very good-looking, with dark-brown curly hair, like handsome English yeomen in figure and complexion. One of them carried the huge golden spoon stuck into his girdle, I suppose as a badge of office. Soon after the whole party started for Marand. The Princess was mounted on a well-shaped gray, covered with a net of silver wire. The widow, who was elderly, alone rode *en cavalier*. All the females of the party seemed quite at home on horseback.

At 5 P.M. we mounted and rode eleven versts to Marand. All the way we skirted beautiful hills, covered with trees and verdure, and abounding in streams. I was mounted on an ill-shapen horse, with an ugly, filthy saddle, but not so excruciating as those ordinarily used by Cossacks. On reaching Marand, we had to cross the river, about 200 yards broad and a yard deep, and very muddy and filthy. The ferry-boat was filthier than the river, and crowded with horses. We observed a small steamer unfinished and the paddles unpainted. After crossing we walked a hundred yards to the rest-house, a dirty, wretched place, where no supplies were to be

had. I was shown a room, eight feet square, full of flies, fleas, and filth, and here, on a filthy sofa, I lay down exhausted. The rest of the house was occupied by the Princess Despéni, who kindly sent me some delicious tea. Presently B—— came to say he had engaged a better room at the end of the village. I managed to crawl there, sick and weary, and found a better room certainly,—one, in fact, nearly as good as a Banyan's shop in the poorer order of hamlets in India. The water stood in it in pools. Here, however, I managed to get some sleep, in spite of the merriment of some jolly Mingrelians, who sang with stentorian voices, until B—— lost his temper, and threatened them with eternal perdition, and with that—of which they seemed to be even more alarmed—the police.

We got up on the morning of the 10th of August in improved spirits, and it being market-day at Marand, we went out to reconnoitre. The pretty peasant girls kept coming in till 10 A.M. with their eggs and chickens. It was exactly an English fair of the old, old time. There were the dames, so smart and shrewish; the maidens, simple and yet

roguish; quacks selling their infallible recipes; farmers higgling over their bargains; and rough clowns, ragged and burly, jostling their way through the crowd, with small respect for toes or petticoats. Only—except my own and B——'s—there was not an ugly face to be seen; in respect to beauty it might have been a fair of the Olympians, masquerading in rustic guise. It was a sight to daze a painter, and to furnish him with models for his life.

B——, like most plain men, is a passionate admirer of beauty. He was in his glory. Seeing a pretty girl, who was anxious to buy some rouge, and could offer nothing but four apples in exchange, he said to the *marchande*—"Give her the pot. I'll pay for it." The happy little peasant, to the astonishment of the bystanders, secured her prize, and in the excess of her delight, kissed the hand of the donor. Immediately a crowd were attracted to the spot by the unheard-of generosity of the stranger. Hereupon B——, spying another beautiful girl, about fourteen or fifteen years old, asked her if she, too, would like a present. "Choose," he said, "anything you see; I will pay for it." The

maiden looked wistfully round on all the gay bottles and gewgaws, but shrank back afraid to declare her choice. "Choose!" cried all about her. "Of what are you afraid? Has not the stranger already made Melanie happy? He will not disappoint you." At last the blushing girl managed to pick out a bottle of lavender water, which was opened and handed to her friends, who were in astonishment at the fragrance and at the marvellous liberality of the donor. In short, B—— went on repeating his generosity, and at the expense of a few roubles made a dozen beauties happy, the plainest of whom would have turned the heads of all the exquisites in the brightest *salon* at Paris.

At 2 P.M. the Princess Despéni left, and we went to see her mount and bid her adieu. We then dined with the agent of the Poti company, who gave us fresh caviare, most delicious; a Russian soup called borzeh, not bad; also some Curaçoa. I then despatched my kit to Teflis, and paid eighty roubles, something more than 13*l.*, for the carriage. We were ourselves to travel light, with just a portmanteau.

We had now got over the worst portion of the whole journey between England and Tehran, viz., the part between leaving the Black Sea steamer and arriving at Marand. The distance, it is true, is not great, only about sixty miles, but in those sixty miles many a constitution has succumbed. Poti itself is one of the most unhealthy places in the world, and the Rhion and its banks, as far as Marand, where the higher ground commences, are not much better. Ministers and personages of high rank will, of course, find all difficulties smoothed for them; but for ordinary mortals it is not expedient to attempt the journey in July or August. There is then not sufficient water in the river for a steamer to ascend, and the voyage by boats and the journey by land are not to be thought of for any but very robust persons. The excitement of travelling and the anxiety to get on kept off fever for the time, in my case; but I have no doubt I laid, in the short expedition just described, the seeds of an illness, which, it will be seen, soon after nearly cost me my life.

At 7 A.M. on the morning of the 11th of August, our curricle was at the door of our hut, with three

horses, and the bells ringing merrily over the shaft horse. This horse is generally a good trotter, while those on the right and left are inferior, and canter and caper to keep up with his trot. We walked down to the agent's and shook hands with him. He seemed pleased, and, with the usual Russian hospitality, gave me an invitation, if I returned that way. We also waited on the colonel commanding the station, an old veteran with a sprightly daughter. We were now off, and I found the jolting less than I had expected. Our cart was open and springless, and we went at a good rate over the fields, and by a side road, the proper road being under repair. Many pretty villages we passed, out of which ran pretty peasants peering at us with their modest eyes. "This country," I said to myself, "will one day be a magazine of grain, a storehouse of nations." As it was, we did not fail to remark various rich crops, such as sugar-cane and Indian corn, and we took note of the productive quality of the soil, black, friable, and stoneless.

At 10 A.M. we reach the first station, a small village, eighteen versts from Marand. B—— told me that the post was let, and sub-let, to the great disadvan-

tage of the Government, which pays 1,200 roubles yearly for every three horses. The contractors sublet the right of furnishing the horses for 800 roubles, and so it goes on till the actual *fournisseur* of the horses gets only 300 roubles. Whenever Prince Bariatinski, the Viceroy, wants to travel, the contractors send out and offer any terms for first-rate horses, which are driven *ventre à terre*, and sweep through the country like a hurricane, and the Prince is pleased, and congratulates himself at the admirable way in which the post-office regulations are carried out, while the ordinary traveller is only too lucky if he can reach his destination without wearing out his own shoe-leather.

Our next stage was other eighteen versts to Kutais, a town of moderate size, capital of Imeritia, and not unlike an Indian cantonment. Some nice villas are perched on hills, and the Rhion rushes brawling through the town, plainly hinting that navigation is here no longer practicable. Above Kutais, in fact, it is but a mountain stream. We drove past the post station, a miserable place in the centre of the lowest part of the town, to the

hotel, the site of which is, at least, fifty feet higher, and where there is a ball-room in which 200 people might meet. We had a wretched dinner of stale caviare, indifferent soup, the interior of some animal, a tongue smothered in rancid butter, bad cucumbers, and worse wine. Here B—— had left his *dormeuse*, a carriage of the olden time, towering high, with imperials at top, a rumble behind, and a seat for a servant beside the coachman in front. This monster vehicle required at least four horses to draw it. We left Kutais at 3.30 P.M., and reached Simonette, eighteen versts, at 5.45. This station is beautifully situated on an eminence, with the river in front and noble hills beyond. The hills, indeed, after Kutais, swell into mountains over 2,000 feet high. B—— told me they had not been explored. They are thickly wooded, and, to judge from appearances, must be full of game, and must also present some good spots for sanitaria. As far as Kutais we had been going in a north-easterly direction from Constantinople, and away from Tehran. Now we turned south, and were going with an easterly sweep to Teflis. At 6.30 P.M. we went on again, making

haste to cross, before dark, a river about five versts off, which, from its depth, would have been an ugly impediment in the dark. We reached Kuiril, the fourth station from Marand and about sixteen versts from Simonette, at 9 P.M., and passed the night as well as the usual pests would let us. As we occupied the room which is kept locked, and opened only for generals or diplomates, fancy told us what would have been our plight in the outer apartments.

At 7 A.M. of Sunday, the 12th August, we started and passed along the bank of the Rhion, through a beautiful mountainous country, resembling Saxon Switzerland. Scarce a habitation was to be seen, until we got near the end of the stage. We then saw two or three houses perched in a most picturesque fashion on the top of lofty hills. The river is here a brawling stream, seemingly well adapted for trout, but, though I gazed intently into it, I could see no fish.

At 10.30 A.M. we reached the station, which is called Belog, and is twenty-two versts from Kuiril. As it offered little inducement to stop, we went on forthwith, and passed through very similar scenery to Molette, eighteen versts. From this we had the

longest and most difficult stage of all, thirty versts, to Suram. About twenty versts of the road had been very well made, but it appeared to me that it was too high, being carried along the side of the mountain, half-way up. This causes it to wind very much, and renders it frightfully dangerous in places with spirited horses. There is but a breadth of a yard between the traveller and a precipice of some hundred feet. It would surely have been better to have kept the mid valley, where the work would have been easier, safer, and less expensive.

We passed several gangs of soldiers, engaged in making the road, and at one place, where it was steep, there was a carriole with three horses, and five soldiers. The horses would not go on, and two of the soldiers beat them cruelly with pieces of wood as thick as a man's leg. One of them then struck the middle horse on the leg, and stabbed it with his club in the belly. The animal plunged violently, but would not or could not go on. Had the soldiers got out of the vehicle and pushed, while some one tugged at the horses' heads, no doubt they would have pro-

ceeded. B—— shouted to them not to act like cowards, but they paid no attention.

About eight or nine versts from Suram the road descends from the hills into the plain in which Teflis is situated. Here by perpetual turns and windings the journey is rendered many times longer than it would be as the crow flies. Luckily the whole is one unbroken descent, and though over fresh metal unbeaten down, we made rapid progress. The scenery was very beautiful, but I was too tired to enjoy it.

On reaching the village of Suram, which is 3½ versts from the station, we discovered that the box of the fore wheels of the carriage was in a state of ignition, and almost burned through. We were, therefore, obliged to leave the dormeuse, and mount on the top of our luggage, which was piled on a carriole, where we held on with great difficulty, and were shaken to pieces. Previously, however, to our ascending to this undignified seat, we took tea with a lieutenant of Engineers, whose house was close by. He told me that Suram was very unhealthy, and that the year before, out of 3,000 soldiers employed on

the road, 1,000 were constantly ill with fever. He said the sickness was owing to there being always a cold wind and a bright intensely hot sun. The men threw off their clothes, and were immediately struck down with fever. I asked him the height of the neighbouring hills, but, though an engineer officer, he could give me no information about them. The post-house at Suram, which is the last under the management of the Poti company, is a detestable one. It is a wood hovel, surrounded by a wall six feet high. Every kind of filth abounds. There are people in charge of the place, but they make no attempt to cleanse it. I passed a miserable night on a wooden bed, with a cloak for bedding. In the former stations the musquitoes had been outdone by the fleas; here the fleas were less venomous than the musquitoes.

I rose at 6 A.M. on the 13th, dirty, weary, and miserable. Means of ablution there were none. Though I had kept the windows shut and had had a thick cloak over me, I felt the cold very much during the night, which shows how high Suram must be above the sea. B—— called

me out to see a *sous-officier*, who had gone from Petersburg to Burján, 3,000 versts, in eight days, carrying despatches. The man did not look tired, and was on his way back. At 10 A.M. the dormeuse arrived from the village of Suram, repaired. B—— now pressed me to go to Burján to see Prince Bariatinski. He said that he himself must go, and that it would not be courteous in me, when the Viceroy was so near, to pass without paying him a visit. On consideration I thought it best to assent, so we started, and at 2.30 P.M. reached Burján, a delightful summer retreat from Teflis, twenty-seven versts from Suram, situated in a defile of the mountains, and on the river Kúr, or Cyrus, which falls into the Caspian, and is here a rapid muddy stream about seventy yards across. The road is all the way a succession of steep, and in some places almost frightful ascents and descents, where the breaking of an axle, the recalcitration of the horses, or any other mischance, would precipitate the traveller into the river from a height of from sixty to two hundred feet. B—— sat very quietly, only remarking occasionally, "Dieu nous conserve si les

chevaux s'arrêtent!" At one place, however, he was not so cool, and earnestly recommended that we should get out, saying, "What is the use of risking it? I do not mind being killed for my country, but I do not want to lose my life for no good." He told me that a General Davanoff had been killed somewhere near, having been pitched over a precipice in his carriage, which was dashed to pieces.

The road winds along the proper left bank of the river. On each side are hills from 600 to 2,000 feet high, covered with woods. Clusters of pines and cypresses at the very top of some of the hills add much to the beauty of the scene. The station is at the Suram side of the town. Passing this, and crossing a bridge over the Kúr, we drove, turning to the left, to the hotel, a low building of stone, which holds, perhaps, a hundred beds. There are many neat villas before reaching it, and a pretty little church on the top of an eminence. After a good dinner—the first worthy of the name for many days—and an excellent bottle of Bordeaux, I lay down to sleep, and B—— went to see Prince Baria-

tinski. At 5.30 he returned, and said the prince had invited me to tea at 8 P.M.

At 7 P.M. we walked some three hundred yards farther up the defile to a spot where are *eaux minérales*. The band of the *Etat Major*, the prince's own, was playing exquisitely, and about a dozen ladies and gentlemen were lounging about in a sort of gallery listening to the music. To the right, over a bridge, was the prince's house, and one for his suite. At eight o'clock the prince came from his own house and walked with me to that of his suite, where the tea-table was spread with rather a substantial repast. There were two arm-chairs, one on each side of the prince's seat. He gave that on his right to me and on his left sate the beautiful Madame Davidoff *née* Princesse Orbeliani. This lady, who is a sparkling brunette, and seemed about eighteen, is the wife of Colonel Davidoff, one of the Viceroy's aide-de-camps.

As I was seated so close I had a good opportunity of studying the appearance of the conqueror of Schamyl. Prince Bariatinski is about six feet two inches high, very well made, and with a

noble carriage, which accords well with his high rank. He appeared to be about forty, had brown hair of a *nuance intermédiaire*, a high massive forehead, but one which shelves upward, that is, is narrower at the top of the head than at the brows, rather small gray eyes, and a somewhat stern and commanding expression. He was then the second personage in rank in Russia, being the *only* field-marshal, Viceroy of Caucasia, Grand Cordon of St. George, and at the head of an army of two hundred thousand men. B—— told me that the courier who had come from Petersburg in eight days, had brought important despatches about the recent massacres in Turkey, and the current of the prince's thoughts seemed to be in that direction. In the midst of a conversation about other things, he said, "What did you think of Constantinople? Is it not a fine city?" I said I had heard much of it, but the reality exceeded what had been told me. He turned away and mused for a little. I asked about the antiquities of Caucasia, and he said there was an old Turkish building at Poti, and that they were said to be the remains of Greek

architecture, but he did not much believe it. The most remarkable thing, he said, was a church not far from Burján, a cathedral, in which St. Chrysostom had been detained, and which appeared quite new. Talking of *la chasse*, he said game was abundant at Burján, and among other wild animals there were bears, and one bear, in fact, in the hill close by.

I rose early on the 14th, and enjoyed the luxury of a bath. We then took a walk, and at noon called on Madame Davidoff, who said that, according to Armenian histories, her family name, Orbeliani, was originally Mangan belian, and that according to the same authority the family came originally from China, and settled in Georgia in the third or fourth century A.D. She showed me the engraved title-page of an address presented to Prince Bariatinski. Its subject was the surrender of Schamyl, who is advancing to the prince, seated in the newly-conquered fortress. Another engraving shows the assault, up a very scarped rock. Men are being thrown headlong from the walls into the abyss. I asked how many soldiers the prince had. Madame Davidoff, who did not at all see the gist of the question, said about

30,000; while her husband, with more prudence, replied he did not know. I then spent some hours in reading Gille's *Travels in Caucasia*, and at 4.30 P.M. we mounted Cossack horses, and rode, first along the beautiful defile beyond the prince's house, and then up the side of the mountain, along the brow of which we passed, looking down on Burján from a sheer precipice of 2,000 feet, so perpendicular that I could have dropped a stone down on the band as they played. The scenery reminded me very much of that at Mahableshwar, in the Bombay Presidency.

CHAPTER V.

La Chasse at Burján—Monastery of Timotismani—Burján to Akhaltzik—The Bayard of the Army of the Caucasus—Abbás Túmán—A Polish Beauty—Monastery of Saphár—Return to Burján—Burján to Gargarieff—Cruelty of the Russians—Gori —Tiger-shooting in Caucasia—Gori to Teflis.

I WAS just commencing my second dream on the night of the 14th of August, when M. B—— came into my room with Colonel Blyk, chief engineer, who said he was going on a hunting expedition into the mountains next day, and would be glad of my company. He assured me that there was every chance of finding bears, though roebucks were to be the main objects of the chase. After this, excitement kept me from sleeping, and I was up at 4 A.M. and using strenuous efforts to rouse B——, whose passion for hunting, being extremely limited, had had no effect on his natural somnolence. At

last I succeeded, and we walked down to the colonel's house, and, after tea and a cigar, mounted, and, attended by several Cossacks, took our way to the mountains on the left of the Kúr River. Having crossed the Kúr by a tolerable wooden bridge, we turned to the right, and then to the left, and entered a densely wooded glen. We then ascended a hill about 1,500 feet high, and after dismounting, were posted in places where it was supposed the game would break cover, while the Cossacks, with a number of savage-looking dogs, beat round the base of the hill. After a little time the dogs gave tongue and came in pursuit of two roebucks, not far from where I was, but the cover was so thick there was no getting a shot. At 10 A.M. the colonel said he must return to attend upon the prince, and gave me his gun loaded with slugs, and said I might have the chasseurs to myself. After going on a little, B——, too, declared he must return, as he could walk no farther. Indeed the exercise was very severe, as the cover was in many places most dense and full of thorns, and the ascents and descents were extremely steep. Add to which there was nothing

to eat or drink, except a little coarse bread and vodka, which the Cossacks had with them. I managed, however, to cool my thirst with wild raspberries, which grow on these hills in abundance, and I was very glad to be alone with the Cossacks and Rahim, who were all eager to kill some large game. But though we worked on vigorously till 4 P.M., we could not get a shot, except once at an eagle, though the traces of bears and deer were quite fresh in many places. I, therefore, resolved to return while I had strength left to carry me home, but we had got to a place so exceedingly steep that had it not been for the innumerable shrubs and trees we certainly should have broken our necks. As it was, one of the Cossacks did not like to risk the descent, and after we had got down, we had to wait an hour for him, until he could seek out an easier place. On returning to the hotel, I found that the *troupe* who had been with me in the *Emperor Alexander* steamer had arrived, and were to sing that night before the prince, who had sent me an invitation. I went accordingly, and sat just behind Prince Bariatinski, and next him

at supper. He talked much of hunting in England, and in a way that showed him to be an ardent sportsman. As for the concert, the most that can be said for it was that it formed an excuse for a pleasant reunion, at which some twenty or thirty ladies were present. The performers themselves, however, were highly satisfied, and drank champagne till 4 A.M., enlivening their supper with occasional bursts of song, their voices not being much improved by the wine.

The 16th was devoted to an expedition to the famous monastery of Timotismani, which is 14 versts from Burján, in an easterly direction. I walked down to Colonel Blyk's house at 10 A.M., and was told we should have to wait a little before horses could be procured. The post-horses, they said, were greatly overworked, and the Viceroy, on his last expedition, killed a dozen between Teflis and Burján, coming at his usual headlong speed. To pass time I took a walk with the colonel in the direction of Suram, and went on until the road itself ended, and we were stopped by the clouds of dust which a party of soldiers, who were at work on the road, were raising.

Each soldier, while so employed, gets 10 kopeks, about 4*d*., a day extra. The officer had scrambled up the almost perpendicular mountain side, and was singing away, with perfect unconcern, some 400 feet above our heads, with his legs dangling over the precipice and his soul dangling over eternity. At noon we started for the monastery, in the springless carrioles of the country. The road first passes up the mountain on the right bank of the Kúr, and for some distance there is a tremendous precipice on the left hand, over which a shy or mistake of the horses would hurl the carriage. The route then passes along the summit of the hills, and by a stagnant lake, where I observed some snipe, and then enters a gloomy pine forest. After some versts an extremely steep and dangerous descent leads to more open ground, in which a river is twice crossed. Beyond this again the road skirts some magnificent rocks, in the tops of which a number of square hermitages are hewn, once tenanted by ascetics, and now by many falcons and other birds of prey. Soon after this we came to a defile, and, passing over some beautiful greensward, reached a group of fine trees, where, on

ground sloping up to a mountain, in a complete *cul de sac* of hills, stands the monastery. It is of brick, the ponderous large bricks of the East; a plain oblong building, with a dome in the centre. The inside is covered with paintings of saints and inscriptions in the priestly Georgian character. The chapels were filled with green boughs, for the Viceroy had been spending two days in it with the ladies of his court and his band of musicians. Feet tripped lightly in the gay mazurkah over the graves of the monks, and fronting the portal was a gigantic swing, which looked very like a gallows. We dined on the greensward, and when we had finished our repast some peasants brought a number of trout for sale; none of them weighed more than half a pound. After smoking our cigarettes, and admiring the rich verdure and many-tinted foliage of the trees, we returned to Burján, and sat for a quarter of an hour on the brink of a precipice listening to the band playing many hundred feet below us.

I was now most anxious to proceed to Teflis, but B—— declared that it was absolutely necessary for him to go to Akhaltzik and Abbás Túmán, as he had

business there of importance; and as this would not cause a delay of more than a day or two, I could not well refuse to accompany him. Add to this, I was, in fact, powerless, being ignorant of the country and the languages. At 10 A.M., therefore, on the 17th, we started for Akhaltzik in a carriole. About four versts from Burján we passed a very remarkable and picturesque ruined castle on the right bank of the Kúr. It stands on a lofty, isolated peak, about 700 feet high, which shoots up in the valley traversed by the Kúr, while the valley itself is bounded on either side by mountains from 1,500 feet to 2,000 feet high, those on the river's proper right being clothed with pines to the summit, while those on the opposite side are bare, with rugged cliffs and rocks piled on rocks. Similar fortresses, similarly situated, are to be seen all along the route from Burján to Abbás Túmán, and in many other parts of Caucasia. These, with the numerous splendid monasteries, and remains of fine bridges and other public works, sufficiently prove, what history tells us, that before the arrival of the Turks Georgia was a populous and flourishing kingdom. The Turks stamped out civilization wherever

they came, and turned this beautiful paradise into a den of thieves. The castle looks best from the Burján side, and is even more picturesque than any of the castles on the Rhine. About five versts farther on I observed a large strip of the forest, many acres in extent, in which all the trees seemed to have been struck with lightning; they were all withered, and the contrast of their brown leaves with the rich green which preceded and followed was most remarkable.

At 1 P.M. we reached Akshúr, 25 versts from Burján. Here there is a castle like that already described, but on a much larger scale, and the peak on which it stands is more isolated, so that even in these days of rifled cannon it is still a place of some strength. In the Crimean war it was occupied by the Turks, who were drawn out of it by a feint, and then defeated by the Georgian militia, with the loss of fifty men and two guns. The post-house is a miserable hut, which with such scenery around is doubly an eyesore. I could not, however, help feeling interested in the post-master, who was a very handsome, soldier-like looking man, when B—— told me that he had greatly distinguished himself in the above-mentioned

fight with the Turks, and had captured one of the guns. On the strength of this anecdote I gave the dirty little son of the hero twenty kopeks.

At Akshúr we mounted a couple of ragged but wiry ponies, and the head man of the village accompanied us six versts, when he applied to the head man of the next village to take his place. But he was busy settling boundaries, as indeed we saw with our own eyes, so he sent a peasant with us, who, fresh from the plough, and with his plough harness, managed to keep up with us, though we galloped a great part of the way. The hills now lost their vegetation, and rose into huge, dreary-looking mountains. Here and there a hamlet peeped out, perched on the top of a precipice, exciting our wonder as to how the inhabitants glued themselves on.

About ten versts from Akshúr, we passed a detachment of soldiers at work on the road. Akhaltzik is seen at a distance of six or seven versts, and has rather an imposing appearance, which is not supported on a near approach by the reality.

Close to the town the Kúr is crossed by a bridge, and just before we reached this we came upon a

party of Russian soldiers at ball practice. They were firing with bayonets fixed, with a wider stride than our riflemen take, and with the weight more on the foot to the rear. The attitude was not graceful, but the practice seemed to be pretty good, as the drum sounded constantly after a shot was fired. The target was about 150 yards off, and no flags were waved, nor had the signal-man at the target any cover. Moreover, the line of firing was unpleasantly close to the road, and a number of peasants with characteristic apathy approached so near to it, that I expected to see one of them rolled over every minute. Meantime, it began to rain, and I galloped on as hard as I could, as I had no change of raiment. The guide kept up with me, and led me to a nice house with a balcony, where I dismounted, thinking it was the post-house. Presently B—— came up, and said I was wrong, and must ride on, which, on account of the rain, I was loth to do. While we were arguing the matter, the servants of the house came out, and we found that by a happy coincidence we had stopped at the house of Prince Tomanoff, *chef* of the district, and B——'s cousin.

On hearing this, we resolved, although the prince was absent, to pass the night at his house. A dismal night it was. I was devoured by fleas in spite of Keating's powder, and B—— was still more unfortunate. The clouds, which had been gathering since 2 P.M., and which had sprinkled us pretty well as we galloped into Akhaltzik, now sent down a perfect deluge. The lightning blazed incessantly, and the thunder kept up a continual roar, which reverberated in the mountains around us. The little stream on which the prince's house was built rose to a noisy torrent, and it seemed as if the balcony would every moment be washed away, though, in fact, the water was many feet below it. In spite of all this, B——, whose powers of slumbering are quite portentous, would have remained in blissful unconsciousness, but all of a sudden the part of the roof just over his bed was blown away by the storm. Then as he lay snoring on his back, with his mouth wide open, a cataract descended on him, which literally washed him off his couch, and dispelled his dreams in a moment. Incredible as it may seem, however, he had no sooner, wet as he was, curled himself up in a

corner in the next room, than he went off again into a sound sleep, and did not wake till the morning.

At 10 A.M. on the 18th we mounted a couple of ragged ponies, and started with Prince ——, an officer of Cossacks, for Abbás Túmán. It still rained a little, and the road was six inches, and in some places a foot, deep in mud. After crossing the wooden bridge, we turned to the south-west, and rode up a hill, which seemed to be composed of nothing but filth, passing the foot of Akhaltzik on our left, and the native town on our right. We then rode along by the river over several hills, and then for two versts up the side of a mountain. From the top there was a fine view, and below it appeared a village, four versts from Akhaltzik, where a sharp fight took place during the late war. The Turks were besieging Akhaltzik, in which was a single Russian battalion, while they had several thousand men and sixty guns; at least so said our Cossack guide. They had also a number of ropes ready to hang the Russian garrison for attempting to hold out in a defenceless position. Indeed, the poor Russians had been three days almost without food, and were disposed to surrender;

all but the commandant, who went down to the magazine, and swore he would fire it unless the troops promised to hold out, which at last they did. Meantime, four Russian battalions came up to relieve the place, and the Turks encountered them at the village, four versts off, where they had placed their sharpshooters among some tall reeds on the river's bank. The Russians suffered some loss in crossing, but once over they got among the Turks with the bayonet, and routed them.

The hero of the day was Prince Tarkanoff, who is the Bayard of the army of the Caucasus. He himself believes that his life is a charmed one, and that, under the protection of his patron saint, he cannot be killed. Accordingly, though his clothes have been riddled with balls, he has never been wounded, and on this occasion he performed very remarkable exploits. In a former battle, when Prince Bebutoff commanded, and Prince Bariatinski was chief of the staff, Tarkanoff, with his single battalion, charged a regiment of Turks, who were strongly posted; he killed the Turkish colonel in single combat, and cut down the standard-bearer and another officer.

His horse was shot under him, but he kept hold of the flag he had won, and shouted to his men to come on and take it. They rushed headlong on the enemy, and carried all before them. For this feat Tarkanoff was allowed to distribute the rewards to his men himself, and whatever honours he applied for for his officers were granted.

Our guide further informed us that but for the English the Russians would have captured Kars in a few hours, and that the army of the Caucasus was incomparably superior to the other Russian troops. He added that Tarkanoff had led the storming party at Gounieb, when Schamyl was made prisoner, and that under him the Caucasian regiments would stand against either English or French!

The route now lay over bare hills till within five versts of Abbás Túmán. Thence the scenery improved and began to resemble that of parts of the Indian ghâts. Thick woods clothed the heights, which rose once more to the dignity of mountains on each side of the valley of the Kúr. After several steep ascents and descents we came upon what is called a carriage road by the side of a river, along

which we galloped, passing the remains of a bridge, and also a spot where the Avars descended from the hills and almost captured the son of Prince Woronzoff. According to our Cossack guide, they did take him, but B—— affirmed that he was saved by the fleetness of his horse. These Avars are a wild race, who are even now rather troublesome, and formerly used to carry off travellers and keep them till they were ransomed.

Abbás Túmán is situated in a defile thickly wooded. A small fort, now in ruins, on an eminence, marks the entrance to the defile. There are mineral springs of three temperatures. The hottest is about 100° of Fahrenheit. We alighted first at a room about eight feet square, where the police officer dwells among flies innumerable. We then went on to a lodging in a dirty wooden hut, where there were two wooden bedsteads full of bugs. The walls were literally black with flies, but the fleas were still more numerous. After killing three or four each moment for some time, I left off in despair. It now began to rain violently, and I sat cooped up in this horrible den of insects, dolefully speculating on the miseries

of the coming night, and sometimes, in a half doze, imagining myself one of those wretched mendicants in India, who sell themselves for a quarter of an hour at a time to the Banyan's hospital for vermin, getting so much for allowing the insects to dine off them. On venturing out for a little in spite of the rain, I discovered that the lanes, besides being knee-deep in mud, were guarded by bands of ferocious dogs, as numerous as those at Stamboul, but larger and stronger. At night a stranger would be torn in pieces by these brutes.

Meantime, B—— came to tell me that he had met a Polish lady of his acquaintance. In fact, on some pretence or other, she very soon showed herself, a sort of Lola Montes, only a blonde, with a cigarette in her mouth, and a very peculiar *coiffure*. How that delicate, rose-bodied (as the Orientals would say) creature could exist in the place in which we were, remains to me to this day a marvel. As night fell, such hosts of insects came out that I was smarting all over my body at once. My face and hands swelled up, and I really thought I should have been driven distracted by the torture. This was the

only place I had ever been at where the flies, having maddened every other living being during the day, refused to rest at night, and continued their attacks in spite of the darkness. In addition to the flies, fleas, and bugs, there were innumerable black-beetles, and a good many centipedes; and I could see one of the latter gentry in the leaves of the boughs which formed the roof, just over my head. In spite of all this, B——, blessed with the hide of a buffalo, was soon fast asleep. In the morning, by dint of walking about in my heavy boots, making as much noise as possible, and by opening the doors and windows, so as to create a damp, unpleasant draught, I managed to waken B—— and his servant Yakúb. I insisted that we should start back immediately for Burján; but, as it still rained heavily, he objected, and proposed instead that we should walk down and look at the springs. These are close to the river, and it is curious to see jets of water, quite hot, in such close juxtaposition to the cold stream. The taste of the mineral water was not unpleasant, and it was clear and very abundant. A number of invalid soldiers were located around the springs in tents of so flimsy

a texture that they must have been poor protection against the sun, and still less efficacious against the pouring rain. On returning from the springs, as B—— said he would not start, and pretended that horses were not procurable, I determined on setting off alone, and on foot. Just as I was going, B—— struck his flag, and sent for the horses, and we mounted and rode back to Akhaltzik under a steady rain the whole way, and through such mud that we could not get our steeds out of a walk. We alighted again at the house of Prince Tomanoff, and B—— then declared that he should go to see the monastery of Saphár, which is ten miles to the south-east of Akhaltzik, among the mountains, and only to be reached by a very difficult path. Weary and wet, I was determined not to allow myself to be beaten, so I said I would accompany him. Luckily, we got two capital horses, and off we set at 5.30 P.M., with one of Prince Tomanoff's servants as our guide. The road was a mass of mud with deep holes, but we rode briskly along, having the fear of returning in the dark to stimulate us. Presently we came to a stream, which we crossed three times, and then began to

ascend a mountain. After a mile or so, our guide proposed a short cut, and we rode up the almost perpendicular side of the mountain off the path, and where, had our steeds slipped, we should have rolled down hundreds, or it may be thousands, of feet. The poor brutes seemed to know the danger, and, by super-equine efforts, managed to get upon more level ground. We then came to a small hamlet, where we procured a couple of guides. These men took us down a very steep declivity, at the end of which we had to ascend a staircase of rock. B—— here showed himself a most accomplished horseman, for he rode down the slippery steep and up the rocky ladder without a blunder. We now passed along the side of a mountain by a path so narrow that it looked like a ribbon before us. On our left was a tremendous ravine, which deepened as we ascended, till it was, I should imagine, 2,000 feet from where we rode to the bottom.

After winding along some two or three miles, we at length came in sight of the monastery, magnificently situated in the centre of a crescent-shaped curve in the mountains, between 2,000 and 3,000 feet above the plain, and with a

castle frowning over it from a giant rock some 200 feet higher still than that on which the monastery is placed. The passage to the latter from the mountain on which we were, was by a narrow ledge of rock, certainly not more than a yard broad, and broken and uneven. A single false step might have sent even a man on foot down into the abyss, and I had no sooner cast my eyes upon it than I dismounted. Not so B——, who, with wonderful skill and nerve, crossed it on horseback. At one place his horse slipped a little, and sent a great piece of rock thundering down, and I made sure he was gone, but he did not lose his presence of mind in the least. When we were over, the men, who were with us, expressed their admiration of his horsemanship, and I heartily joined in.

The precincts of the far-famed monastery of Saphár are entered by a stone portal, from which a strong wall, 150 yards long, leads up to the main building. Between it and the precipice on the far side of it, is a slip of ground, perhaps 200 yards broad. The monastery resembles that at Timotismáni, and indeed all others in Georgia,

but is far larger and handsomer. On each side is a square stone building with a trap-door in the centre, leading down a great distance. These were secret ways of access and egress, known only to the monks, and by no means free from danger even to their practised feet. At the back of the principal building is a row of fine Saxon-looking arches, well carved and with a long Greek or Georgian inscription. On the reverse side is a fountain of beautiful water. The view down to the plain is magnificent. For a long space there is a tableau of the tops of hills, ridges, and peaks, and beyond these the river; while farther still, huge dark mountains shut in the view. Unfortunately the sun was about to set, and such a ride as we had before us was not to be accomplished without light. So, tearing ourselves away from the beautiful scene, we set off for Akhaltzik at a great rate, and actually arrived at 8 P.M. During the latter part of the journey I trusted entirely to Providence, as I suffer from Nyctalopia, and had no idea where I was going, insomuch that but for the sagacity of my horse, I might easily have broken my neck.

B—— was delighted with his journey to the monastery; his heart expanded with wine, and he told me the history of the fair Pole we had encountered at Abbás Túmán. Marie N——, daughter of a colonel, was forced by her friends into a marriage she detested. She was separated from her husband by an amicable arrangement, and came to live at Teflis. When B—— went to Constantinople, she set off for Poland with 500 roubles in her pocket. She had a Russian soldier as her servant, who robbed her of her all. She gave him into custody, and as there was circumstantial evidence against him, he would be kept in confinement till he confessed the whereabouts of the money. None of it would ever return to its rightful owner, cela va sans dire. "Quant à Marie," added B——, "elle trouvera des amis." He then enlarged on this theme, and spoke of the economy of such arrangements. "Mon dieu!" said he, "on épargne comme ça la moitié de ses appointements!" I replied with a sermon, the truth of which B—— frankly admitted. "But," said he; "man is frail; disons qu'on peut resister pour deux mois, on finit par-

succomber. A quoi bon, donc, de lutter contre un joug sous lequel on doit courber la tête à la fin des fins?" This morality was new to me, and while I was thinking of a reply, I went to sleep, which was, perhaps, the most reasonable thing I could have done.

At 10 A.M. on the 20th of August we started from Akhaltzik for Burján and Teflis. The road was deep in mud, but we had the very pick of the post-horses for our carriole, and went our twelve versts an hour very easily.

We reached Akshúr at a quarter to twelve, and got three fresh horses, with which we went on immediately to Burján. After going a few versts, we met Prince Tomanoff and his wife, a most lovely Georgian. I tried to converse with her, but as she had no French, and I no Georgian, it was a failure. However, the attempt amused her, and she displayed a set of teeth which surpassed anything I had ever imagined in that line. Her husband was worthy of her, handsome, well built, and with a sweet expression of countenance.

We reached Burján at 2.30 P.M., and found there two English clergymen, who were going to visit

Wardy, a city of Troglodytes, sixty miles to the south of Akhaltzik.

On the 21st we took leave of Prince Bariatinski, and started in the *dormeuse* at 10.15 A.M. from Burján, for Teflis. We reached Suram at 1.15 P.M., and had to stop at that detestable place three hours for horses. At last about four in the afternoon, we started, and reached Gargarieff, twenty-five versts from Suram, at 6.30 P.M. Here no horses were to be had, and to add to our ill-luck, the station had tumbled down, and was being rebuilt. There was nothing for it but to pass the night *à la belle étoile*. I slept in the *dormeuse*, and B—— on a cot under a wretched shed. The night was bitterly cold, but like other miseries, it passed.

At 5 A.M. on the 22nd, I got up, or rather out, cold and stiff. A cup of tea refreshed me a little, and I looked on while the horses were being put to for Prince ——, commanding a regiment of five battalions, and, as B—— remarked, so like the Emperor Nicolas, that he might well be mistaken for his son. I had not seen the prince, but for some time I had heard a loud snarl-

ing noise, and was in doubt whether it proceeded from some animal, or from a human being. Presently I found it was the prince, who was abusing all about him with a ferocity that reduced his voice to an absolute snarl. At length the horses were harnessed, and the prince then called the subaltern in charge of the station, and reviled him savagely for not having the horses ready before. He then struck him repeatedly with his fists, and drawing a whip out of his pocket, lashed him furiously over the body, face and head, and finally kicked him with his heavy boots with all his force. This was the first time I had seen a soldier so treated, and it seemed impossible but that he would turn on his assailant and knock him down. He did not, however, show his resentment by any overt act, but stood up and received the blows without flinching, though the expression of his features was marked enough. As for me, my blood was boiling in my veins, and I had much ado to keep silence.

At 6.30 A.M., we got our horses and started for Gori. Throughout this stage we had on our left the splendid snow-capped mountains, which end the

range of Imeritia. We reached Gori, twenty-five versts, about 9.30 A.M., the near fore-wheel of the *dormeuse* going smash just as we entered the town. Gori is a place of 6,000 inhabitants, with a picturesque fort on an eminence, built in the twelfth century, and a monastery perched on a far loftier hill. The great mountain of Yelburz, or Elburz is seen from the town, covered with eternal snow, and 14,000 feet high.

After lodging ourselves at the very excellent station, the *chef de district*, M. Gregorieff, invited us to his house. He had just recovered from typhus, and all his servants were laid up with fever. His wife, pretty, thin, and an invalid, was taking daily baths in the river for her health. She said the water was very cold. These kind people did all they could for us. A room was shown me to make my toilette in, containing a cracked ewer and basin, a good linen towel manufactured in Russia, a bottle of excellent eau-de-Cologne, a hair-brush and comb, which had seen better days, and the most venerable of tooth-brushes, all which were placed absolutely at my disposal. We had an eatable breakfast, and some

good cigars, and madame lent me a handkerchief, which I returned from Teflis, with a fan that cost me many roubles. The said fan, however, I fear never reached the quarter for which it was intended, for bearers of articles of *luxe* as presents are in Russia subject to a disease called—— perhaps I had better not name it.

We now left the *dormeuse*, and getting into a carriole, started at 3 P.M. for Gori. B——'s servant, Yakúb, had been drinking our healths to such an extent that he could hardly see. He had bundled our things into the carriole in a way that rendered it impossible to sit, and after crossing the river from Gori, we had to alight and re-arrange matters. It was well we did, for the road was a succession of the deepest and hardest ruts I had ever seen. The jolting was so fearful that we could hardly keep our seats, though we held on with both hands, and every other available part of the body.

At 5 P.M. we reached a beautiful village belonging to Prince Tarkanoff, the renowned soldier. This is sixteen versts from Gori, and is by far the cleanest and neatest station all the way between Poti and

Teflis. We here found a Russian officer of Cossacks, a gentlemanly, sociable fellow, who gave us tea, and offered us seats in his *fourgon*, which was tolerably comfortable for two, but horribly the reverse for four, as we found.

We started at 6.30 P.M. on a vile road, and every jerk sent our heads together, and against the top of the carriage. After nine versts, we met an officer coming from the station to which we were going; he kindly changed horses with us. Meantime, night was coming on fast, and our progress was slow.

The Cossack officer beguiled the way with his stories. He was about thirty-six years of age, very thin, but well-made, and wiry, and an inch or so above the middle height. He said that lately, in the vicinity of Gori, a tiger had killed and devoured a man, and was shot by two of his comrades. It measured from the neck to the insertion of the tail two archines and a half, or about seven feet six inches, and was, consequently, a royal tiger of the largest size. He said he had himself killed at Prince Tarkanoff's village, at a spot which he pointed out, three

large wolves; he caused a dead horse to be dragged to the spot, and, concealing himself in a hole, shot the wolves one by one. One of them, after being wounded through the body, ran nearly a mile towards the prince's house, a pretty white villa, which overlooks the village. An enormous bear also came to the carcase, but he was afraid to fire, as he had but one barrel. He then told us of his killing a tiger near Lenkeran; he was out with three other officers and twelve soldiers, shooting pheasants, and all the party were lying on the ground eating their dinner, after good sport; suddenly a fine dog, they had, came slinking towards them with his tail between his legs. The owner of the dog said, "There is a wild beast near us! be on your guard!" On this they all rose, and loaded with ball, and the narrator rammed down his ball on the top of a load of shot. They then dispersed. Suddenly the narrator saw a tiger coming along the path, and the instant after, one of the officers fired and wounded it. The beast made an immense spring of seven archines, and alighted close to his assailant, and had crouched for a second spring, when the narrator fired and shot him dead, blowing away a

part of the skull. It turned out to be a small tiger, about three parts grown.

Another time, he said, he was out with the troops in pursuit of Schamyl. An enormous stag had been knocked over by a bullet, and a youngster having foolishly grasped it round its neck to cut its throat, it rose with him, and his clothes being entangled in the horns, he could not disengage himself before the animal went of at full speed. Every one was afraid to fire, and the youth was carried four versts before the stag finished its course by impaling itself on the bayonets of the muskets piled in front of the camp ! !

He said he had married the daughter of a Cossack, and had left the service. Being at some place near the Tcherkess country, where there was a fair, he was warned not to proceed, as the brigands, attracted by the fair, had come down from their hills, and were infesting the roads. However, he went on with his wife and child and a guard of twelve Cossacks. Suddenly a band of Tcherkesses rushed on the carriage, which had got far ahead of the escort, and was hidden from it by a turn in the road. One robber held a pistol to the coachman's breast, another

bade the narrator deliver his purse. He had a double-barrelled pistol, and shot this man dead, the ball going in at his mouth and coming out at the back of his head. Another fellow had seized his child, on which his wife fainted. He shot this man too, in the stomach, and he fell with a loud cry. Meantime, the Cossacks, who were in the rear, came galloping up, and the look-out man of the brigands called to them, "Fly, there is an escort." So intent were the other robbers on the spoil that they never thought of killing the narrator, but, tearing away his purse and cutting loose his portmanteau, went off with it, pursued by the Cossacks, and got clear away with the booty, though two more of their party were killed by the Cossacks, of whom four were wounded in the chase. The narrator had now lost his all, and was obliged to sell his pistol to get food. He applied to return to the service, which was granted, and he had remained in it ever since. His tattered uniform showed his poverty, and an anecdote he told proved how ill subalterns like himself are treated in the Russian service. He had a favourite dog, which he had thoroughly educated himself for the chase, and

which often provided him with a dinner. His colonel took it from him and gave it away to a friend. He said he thought of stealing his own dog, and asked whether he would not be justified. B—— said he would, and I—doubted.

It had now grown quite dark, and suddenly crash went some part of the vehicle. As we could not discover what was wrong, we got out and walked a verst and a half to the station, which is eighteen versts from Prince Tarkanoff's village. It was a most miserable place, with two rooms, one occupied, and the other lately whitewashed, and the bed soaked with the droppings. A dirty woman declared herself the attendant, but all she could furnish was one tallow dip, for which she asked an enormous sum. We supped on some preserved meat, which was eminently nasty. After this we dozed as well as the insects would let us, and started the next morning at 6.30 A.M.

This stage of eighteen versts was a descent the whole way through a beautiful mountainous country, for the most part along the lofty banks of the Kúr. We saw several timber rafts descending the river, and the Cossack officer said that he had once gone on a raft

from Burján to Gori in three hours. The flood was then at its height and there was considerable danger. About two versts from the station, which we reached at 8 A.M., another river falls into the Kúr and swells it considerably. At this place a new station was being built, and was nearly finished. It seemed quite a palace in comparison with the places at which we had lodged. The spot is lovely, and there is, as usual, a monastery at the confluence of the rivers, for in Georgia, as well as in Europe, the monks chose all the most picturesque places for their residences. We passed several hermitages, square holes hewn in the face of the mountains, and apparently inaccessible. At the station we all deserted the *fourgon*, the Cossack officer and a friend getting into one carriole, and we into another.

We now travelled at great speed, and on sighting Teflis, about six versts off, our cars began to race. The Cossack's coachman stopped for a moment, when we cut in before him, and he, trying to regain his place, set off at a tremendous gallop; all he could do, however, was to bring his horses' heads into the small of our backs, as there was not

room to pass. As this was excessively inconvenient, I administered some tolerably hard taps to the nose of the middle horse behind me; thereupon an altercation arose between the coachmen, and while our man was discharging some ponderous Russian oaths at the other with his head turned round, we came full tilt into a bullock-cart, and our things were thrown out, though the carriole did not upset. Altogether it was a fine confusion, for the drivers of the bullock-cart, expecting to be beaten, ran off as hard as they could across the fields, and our servants, fancying they were making off with some of our traps which had fallen on the road, pursued them, while the coachmen fought it out on the spot, and B—— and others swore in Russian, Armenian, and a diversity of tongues, each more inharmonious than the other!

We reached Teflis, fourteen versts, at 9 A.M., and I took rooms at the Hôtel de Caucasie, a bedroom and sitting-room for myself, at 4 roubles and 50 kopeks, and a room for Rahím at 2 roubles and 20 kopeks (about one pound two shillings) a day.

CHAPTER VI.

Teflis—Fête in honour of the Shah's Birthday—Church of the Annunciation—Yermaloff's German Colony—Khajúr—MM, Tengoborski, Kruscnstern and Milhutin and Prince Orbeliani—Hold of Russia on the Caucasus—Colonel B——'s Account of the Taking of Gounieb—Mine Host and Hostess of the Hôtel de Caucasie—Monastery of St. David—Dark Shadows—The Plague of Locusts—Fête of the Prise de Gounieb—Convalescence—The Theatre at Teflis—Teflis to Sadrugli—Sadrugli to Delijân—Delijân to Gokcha.

The city of Teflis ("warm springs"), the capital of Georgia, now contains about 40,000 inhabitants. It is situated at the foot of mountains 3,000 feet high, in a rather barren plain, to which even the Kúr, which flows through it, and divides the city into two portions, imparts but a limited fertility. The traveller from the north crosses to that part of the city where the hotels are by a rather handsome bridge, built by Prince Woronzoff. Before reaching the hotels the palace of the Viceroy of the Caucasus is passed on

the right, a neat building, with a tolerable garden. Beyond the palace to the south are one or two hotels, and close to the Hôtel de Caucasie is the theatre. Above these, higher up the slope of the mountain, is the house of the Persian Consul-General, and the road to Khajúr, a summer retreat from the heats of Teflis, situated in the mountains. The church of St. David, on the right bank of the Kúr, and that of the Annunciation on the left bank, are the most interesting of the Armenian churches, of which there are some forty in all. About a mile to the north-west of the bridge are the race-course, and a large garden where the band plays, and also a village inhabited by Germans. The general appearance of Teflis from the heights is picturesque, and decidedly Oriental.

At 1 P.M., on the 23rd of August, after I had rested a little, B—— came for me and took me to the baths. The water is mineral and of a high temperature. We had to wait an hour and a half before there was room to admit us, and B——, whose constitution is proof against indulgences which would kill ordinary mortals, spent the time in devouring quantities of grapes. We then stripped,

and with only a cloth round our loins, stepped into a circular room, where the temperature was above 100°. Here we sat down, and buckets of hot water were flung over us. We were then scrubbed with a brush, and rubbed with a cloth, which brought off the outer skin in rolls. Then, supine on our backs, we were shampooed in a way which ought to have benefited my sciatica and stiffness, but did not. Finally, the greasy gnomes who had us in charge, lathered quantities of soap into bladders, which they inflated with their most sweet breath. They then lathered us all over, and again washed off the soap with lukewarm water, which felt quite cold. We were then robed in a sheet, and led into the next room to cool, and to prevent a chill our feet were placed for a minute or two in hot water. My conviction is that this kind of bath is very debilitating, and attended with no little risk. In many cases chills caught in issuing from the steaming *sudoria* have ended in typhus fever and death. The process produces invariably an excessive and unnatural action of the skin, and unless after extraordinary fatigue and watching, where it is an object

to induce sleep, I would dissuade my fellow-creatures from taking it. As for B—— he revelled in it, and not content with the ordinary shampooing, allowed one of the manipulators to mount on his back, and shampoo him with the soles of his feet, which were so manœuvred as to descend from the shoulders to the loins with a crack like the report of a pistol.

Next day I felt ill, but went to call on M. Tengoborski, the chef de la chancellerie diplomatique, who told me that all the authorities but himself were at Khajúr, a cool retreat in the mountains, fourteen versts off. It being the Shah's birthday, I also paid my respects to the Persian Consul-general, who asked me to dinner. At 7 P.M. I drove to his house, which is several hundred feet above the river, and commands a magnificent view. The drosky driver took me up a road so bad and steep that I could not keep on my cocked hat for the jolting, which somewhat impaired my dignity. A mob of some hundreds of people, or, perhaps, a thousand, were assembled in front of the house, where the band of a Russian regiment was playing very spiritedly. In the pauses squeaked forth native

music, and Persians, entering the ring of bystanders, danced the national dance, a sort of reel or jig, with great animation. On going into the balcony, I was much struck with the view of the city. Perhaps, thought I, from near where I was Nádir may have cast his stern eyes over the town, when, in 1734, the gory head of the Turkish Pasha Abdullah was carried before him, and Teflis, Erivan, and Ganjah were the fruits of a victory over an army eight times more numerous than his own. Perhaps, from that same spot the cruel eunuch-king Aghá Muhammad may have commanded the sack of the city, when in 1795 the churches were levelled, the priests cast bound into the river, and twenty-five thousand beautiful captives were carried off to grace the homeward progress of the Shah.

At dinner the Governor of Teflis occupied the post of honour. I sate on his right and the Persian Consul-General on his left, with M. Tengoborski opposite me and the Turkish Consul on my right. Among the notables were the commandant of the Emperor's Muslim Guards and a colonel of artillery, who made the fireworks, and was intensely gratified

at seeing them, much more, indeed, than any other person there. Every minute he would shout in my ears as a firework went up, "Parachute, parachute!" till the people outside caught up the cry and began to scream "Parachute!" in a variety of intonations. I left about 9 P.M., and as my carriage was not forthcoming, M. Tengoborski offered me a seat with him, and drove me at a slapping pace over the Woronzoff bridge, and through the German colony. He said the bridges had been swept away, year after year, till this one was built. It is a good specimen of engineering skill, nearly level at top and rather broader on the side towards the palace than the other. Tengoborski said his horses cost 4,000 roubles, and had won the prize for trotting at Moscow, having done a verst in a minute and a half. They were certainly superb trotters, sixteen hands high, quite black and very handsome.

He said A—— was much disliked, that he was *très avare et très difficile*, that he had sent his hotel bill of one hundred roubles to him to be taxed, as if he were an attorney. He praised Sir H. Rawlinson highly, and said he was the best European Minister

that had ever been sent to Persia, Russian, French, or English.

I told M. Tengoborski at parting that I should go on to Persia the next week. I knew not how completely prostrated I should be by that time, though I felt increasing symptoms of illness. Next morning, the 25th of August, I was too ill to go out till the evening, when I started in a drosky to see the fête of the Annunciation at the second oldest Armenian church in the city, which was built five centuries ago. The church and the long flights of ladder-like steps by which one ascended to it were thronged by gaily dressed Armenian women. B——'s brother took me into the church, where he purchased several tapers, lighted them, and stuck them up before the altar. He then crossed himself and said a few words. B—— now took me at a great pace in his drosky to the German colony, where we had some porter deliciously cool. The man who served it said he was born in the colony, but his father came from Wurtemberg. He spoke tolerable German. We then drove to the public garden, which had belonged to a Mujtahid or Muslim priest, who sold it to Mirza

Aghí, chief of the merchants, who, falling into debt, sold it to the Russian government for 70,000 roubles. This will give some idea of the value of land at Teflis. The garden contained about fifty acres, and there was a very nice house in it. After speaking a few words to the capel-meister we returned to the church, which was brilliantly illuminated and crowded with all the Armenian belles of Teflis.

Next day I went to pass a few hours with M. Tengoborski at Khajúr, fourteen versts to the south-west of Teflis. I had to take four horses, as the road is very steep and difficult. It passes first by the Persian Consul-General's house, and then up a tremendous hill about 1,500 feet high, and is about 30 feet broad. On the left, however, is a frightful precipice, and as many bullocks, carts, and other things are passed, there is a chance of an accident. The view from the summit is very fine, and one can imagine the arch-enemy placing our Lord on just such a mountain, so wide the view, so weird the gazing place.

After reaching the top, the road passes by yawning ravines, and through perilous places up a con-

tinual ascent, until Khajúr is reached, a pretty village, but rather treeless, some 5,000 feet above the sea. M. Tengoborski's servants were all Persian, his *ménage* excellent. On arriving, water was brought for my face in a large silver basin, and when I had washed, I enjoyed a delicious Kaliyún, or Persian pipe. We then mounted, I on a gigantic Turkoman horse, and he on an Arab. My horse was so tall that I could not get up without a chair. Turkoman horses have no mane in general, though some have the part near the ears left long. M. Tengoborski is lame, having broken his leg in a steeple-chase at Rome. We rode first to M. Krusenstern's house. He was chief of the civil department, a man evidently of marked character and ability.

During our visit, General Milhutin came in, having travelled without a halt from Burján. B—— said he was the life and soul of everything that went on in Caucasia, and the Emperor had already notified to Prince Bariatinski, that he thought of making him Minister of War.

We went next to Prince Gregoire Orbeliani, the Governor-General of Teflis, a fine soldier and patriot.

He did not speak French, but through Tengoborski we held a long conversation. He asked me what I thought of the road from Poti. I said it was at least evident that the government were taking pains to improve it; but that it struck me that the post-houses should all be leased to a single proprietor or company. As it was, since horses could not go beyond the station of their owner, they had continually to return without a load, and, therefore, without payment. He said there was not a capitalist who could afford such a charge. Speaking of Georgia, he said it had been made the high road for every conqueror, but that anciently it had been very flourishing. Several things showed me that the prince was grateful to Russia for having freed his country from the yoke of Persia. This is, perhaps, the general feeling among the Georgians, who are raised to many offices under government. The Armenians, on the contrary, are dissatisfied as to their share of the patronage, and are, besides, very jealous about their women.

The hold which Russia has on the Caucasus is that of the gauntlet, as France holds Algeria, and

England, India. The army of occupation may be reckoned, in round numbers, at 250,000 on paper, and 180,000 actual strength. Of these, about 150,000 are infantry. The cavalry consists of twenty regiments of Cossacks of 1,000 men each, and four regular regiments of dragoons. There are about 380 field guns and 10,000 artillerymen, and two regiments of engineers.

The principal stations are Uslava on the Karakuban River, in about latitude 45°; Vladikavkas, in the mountains of the Tchetchenses; and Tenir Khánshura, in Daghestan; at each of which places are the head-quarters of an army. Of these three armies the first, at Uslava, keeps down the Circassians properly so called; that at Vladikavkas operates against the Tchetchenses; and the third army is employed in reducing the strong country of Daghestan, which was so long the impregnable fortress of Schamyl. Besides these three armies, there is a fourth occupying what is called the line of the Lesghís, a series of posts from Derbend to Teflis, with its head-quarters at Tsartse Kolotze. There is further a frontier force towards Persia of 12,000 men, under a general, whose head-

quarters are at Erivan. There are, besides, numerous garrisons, as in Poti, Kutais, Suram, Gori, Teflis, Derbend, Baku, Lenkeran, Ganjah, Shíshah, Shamákhí, Shirwán, and Kárábágh. In a word, wherever one goes, patrols or parties of soldiers are sure to be seen. I was told that there were not less than 40,000 soldiers employed in making roads in Caucasia when I was at Teflis.

In addition to all this even the civil administration of Caucasia has a military tinge. The governments are held by general officers; the officers in charge of the districts, into which each government is divided, rank with colonels or majors; and the chefs of arrondissements, into which the districts again are subdivided, are either captains and subalterns, or civil officers with corresponding rank. The chiefs of districts have direct control of the police, and the governors, of course, have the troops in their respective provinces under their command.

With so complete a military organization, and so vast a force, it might be thought that Caucasia is for ever incorporated with the Russian Empire, and that the struggles of the gallant mountaineers must every

year grow weaker, till their submission becomes complete. Were this the case, it would not be too much to say that Russia had retrieved in Caucasia all that she lost in the Crimean war, and that the cost of five millions sterling, at which Caucasia is retained, against an incoming of two millions only of revenue, is a wise and politic outlay. Nay, more: even supposing Caucasia produced no return, it would still be wise in Russia to retain what may be called the Gibraltar of the East, an impregnable castle against Turkey and Persia, whence, when the hour of doom has struck, the hosts of the North might issue to overwhelm the sunny South. But Russia, though she can conquer, has not the art of retaining her conquests except by force. Were England enthroned in the Caucasus, what legions of invincible soldiers she would draw from the country itself! Not so Russia: she holds the sword and the whip, but has not the honeyed words of persuasion and conciliation. If Poland should call for reinforcements, Caucasia may be lost. Nor, as I myself learned in 1860, is all the army to be depended upon. There were Poles, mindful of their fatherland; Swedes and others of

the Lutheran faith, who liked not the compulsory bringing up of their children in the Greek Church. One of these told me—his wish may have been father to the thought—that the power of Russia in the Caucasus was but a hollow pageant after all. Speaking of Prince Bariatinski, he gave him but little credit for his military achievements, and said he had no active share in the taking of Gounieb. His tents were pitched, he said, some miles off, and early one morning one of his staff took up a telescope, and saw the soldiers mounting to the storm; he informed the prince, who ordered his horse to be saddled, but by the time he arrived the place was already in the hands of the Russians.

I felt very ill on my return from Khajúr to Teflis, but nevertheless managed to pay a visit to the monastery and Armenian chapel of St. David. It is on the south-western side of the city, and its site is at least 500 feet higher. The attendant told me that the chapel was rebuilt about half a century before my visit, and when first erected few dared to go to it from the town, as the Lesghis and Tchetchenses used to carry off people from it. He showed

me a wall of the old monastery, which, he said, dated 700 years back. A place was pointed out to me where it is said the Armenian girls used to try a sort of *sors* to know if they should have husbands. They threw stones to the spot, and if they did not roll away, the inference was that husbands would be found for them that very year. There is a monument in the chapel to the unfortunate Grüboedoff, "*le poète Russe brillant*," as Gille calls him in his *Lettres sur le Caucase*, who was murdered, in 1829, with all his suite, at Tehran, by the Persians, for having in his house some Georgian females, who had been taken into Persian *harims*. The monument was erected by his widow the Princess Tchadtchavadza, and consists of a female figure in black marble, kneeling with the head bowed down and holding a large black cross, which rises above her head.

My visit to the monastery was on the 31st of August, and the same day the sultry atmosphere was somewhat cooled by a thunder-storm, the rain returning at intervals till the middle of the next month. Teflis is a grand place to be in during a thunder-storm. The terrible voice of the clouds reverberates from height

to height in the mountains above the city, and from the steeps what were but rills of water before the storm come down as foaming torrents, adding to the roar of the tempest. I often lay and listened to such sounds in a state of half unconsciousness, for I had now become very ill. Instead of leaving Teflis for Tehran, as I had intended, I was preparing for a still longer journey, to the far country from which none return. My last walk was up to the cemetery, which stands above the hotel, and between it and the Persian Consul-General's house. I reached the place with the greatest difficulty, and I looked at the men, who were carelessly filling in some fresh graves, and thought that very likely in a few days they would be doing that office for me.

As I came back from the cemetery, I stopped to rest, being so weak, and saw what appeared to be the smoke of a conflagration breaking out in the part of the city nearest the river. On looking very closely, I observed that it was a cloud of locusts, who came on from some distant quarter in such bodies that at length they quite blackened the air, extending half a mile in length, with a depth of perhaps 200 feet.

I was now very ill, that scourge, dysentery, having got firm hold of me. After the 1st of September, I could not leave my room, and was very often light-headed, talking to Rahím in French, and to mine host and hostess in Persian, and being puzzled at their not understanding me. Mine host, M. Guillaume, had been a cook in St. Petersburg, and remembered the dreadful cholera of 1848, when, according to his account, 3,000 persons died in thirty-six hours. The redeeming feature of the disease, in his eyes, was, that none of the cooks in good families died. "No," said he, "they lived too well!"

The *petit verre* was, in his opinion, a great preservation from sickness, and it may have been the carrying out this theory too far, which made his conversation exceedingly obscure at times, or, perhaps, it was the confusion in my own head, which rendered him unintelligible. As for his wife, she seemed to think that I ought to be grateful for anything, even for an illness such as had befallen me, if it saved me from going to Persia, and she repeated very often the story of a French officer, who had been brought to the hotel in an almost dying state from

Tabriz, and who could but articulate as he entered, *Sauvé!*

I had fallen into the hands of an Armenian doctor, who, after a dose or two of castor oil, had treated me with laudanum. The result was, that I grew worse and worse, and at last, when my pulse was over 120, my body reduced to a perfect skeleton, and every symptom of the end showed itself, he came and took leave of me, saying with a stolid grin: "A présent, monsieur, vous êtes complètement guéri!" A kind Providence, however, at this crisis sent to me M. Pileffski, physician to Prince Bariatinski, and from the moment he took me in hand, hope came anew. M. Pileffski is a Pole, an able, agreeable, accomplished man. I learned much about the state of things in Caucasia from him. One day talking of the police he told me that several robbers had broken into his stables and had got out two of the horses, with which they were making off, when they were intercepted by his servants, and one of them was captured. The man had been taken *in flagrante delicto*, but, as a friend remarked, it would be useless to prosecute him.

He would be kept by the police as long as he had any money left, and then let go. As for recovering the horse with which his comrades had made off, it was useless to think of it.

The person, who made the above remark, talking of a certain consul, said a good lesson as to the safety of communication on secret matters by the Russian post was given in his case. Being rather a fussy, foolish man, he had written a secret letter to his government to say that the only way to get secrets out of the Russians was to ply them with wine, when they would disclose any affair, however important. He, therefore, prayed his government to send him some champagne *première qualité*, to be used as an open sesame! His letter, of course, was opened and read in the post, and the Russians chuckled over the idea of cooking him with his own sauce, when the time should come. At last the long looked-for champagne made its appearance; the Russians were invited, and the very hardest-headed among them went. The result may be supposed. The poor consul was left dead drunk under his own table,

while, after making some curious discoveries, his guests departed with a merry heart.

On the 18th of September I was so far recovered as to be able to fix the next day for my departure. In the evening I went for half an hour to the opera house, to be able to say I had seen it. It is small, but most elegant, in admirable taste, and quite original. There is no lower tier of boxes, but the pit goes back under the boxes, which are, perhaps, twenty feet from the floor. The house is painted in arabesques, and the chandeliers are very beautiful. The piece was the *Sonnambula*, performed by my old acquaintances of the steamer.

I now took leave of B——, and prepared to start alone, which, in my dreadfully weak and emaciated state, was no slight undertaking. Had I been a minister, of course B—— would have gone with me, which, as it happened, would have been highly inconvenient for him. The fact was he had been to an Armenian party, a sort of picnic, and had given himself an illness in endeavouring to drink more than the master of the feast. The Armenians, at their parties, drink terribly, and on this occasion the ladies

having sat longer than usual, the master of the feast, as soon as they were gone, ordered twelve wine-glasses full of wine to be presented to each guest, then informed his friends that, to make up for lost time, he had determined to give them twelve toasts all at once. I was not at all surprised at B——'s attempt to outdo the Coryphæus of the wine-party. Imitation was his besetting sin. He carried it so far that, seeing me, when we were travelling together, say my prayers, he went in for that too, posing himself theatrically, and making the sign of his cross, now at his right breast and now at his left. A—— told me that when B—— was travelling with him he was at first somewhat scanty in his ablutions, but, seeing A—— splashing in a tub every morning, it struck him that he, too, must do something in that line. Next day A——, on getting up, heard a great puffing and blowing, and, looking out of the window, saw B—— with his cheeks distended, squirting water over his arms and the upper part of his body! "Nom d'une pipe," said A——, "what are you about?" "Moi," replied B—— with an air of conscious pride, "je me lave à l'Anglais."

I did not get off on the morning of the 19th of September till half-past seven. I had bought an old tarantasse, as I was too ill to stand the jolting of the telekas. The driver for the first stage was one of those dogged Russians on whose stolidity nothing has any effect. The horses he brought from the post-house were strong and very fresh, and we had not gone more than a few hundred yards before his bad driving nearly caused a serious accident. A wisp of hay had fallen off some cart, and was lying in the middle of the street. This attracted the attention of a thoughtful donkey, who was on the look-out for strays and waifs, and he was busy munching away at it, with a pile of things on his back a yard high, when my tarantasse came rattling up at a fast pace. Signor Donkey having been educated probably in a Muhammedan family, was a good predestinarian, and would not budge, saying to himself, no doubt, "If it be my fate to be crushed, let it be so, there is no escaping; if I am fated to live, the carriage is nought." Hereupon the horses of the tarantasse passed on each side of him, and he was entangled in the harness. In less time than it takes to tell it, the

asinine fatalist was twisted off his legs and borne along in the air, discharging the cargo on his back with a velocity which must have been some compensation for the discomfort of his situation in other respects. The horses, not being of so philosophical a turn as the ass, took fright, and I was borne along with great velocity through the crowded bazár, pursued by the sympathy of some and the curses of not a few. I never saw anything so provoking as the stupidity of the driver. He made no attempt to stop the carriage, which was going now on the two wheels on this side, and anon on the other two, lurching in a way which several times nearly sent me out on my head, when suddenly the off horse got entangled in a great pole projecting from a timber cart, and that brought us up all of a heap. As soon as the horses stopped, I got out, and some people ran up and offered me water, thinking, as they saw me pale and staggering, that I was hurt, though it was nothing but the weakness of my late illness.

Half an hour was spent in re-arranging the luggage, which had been finely dislodged by this accident. Afterwards nothing occurred all the way to

Makran Telet, ten versts from Teflis, which we reached at 9.30 A.M. by a villanously stony road. I went on immediately, and reached Kodi, a large village fifteen versts from Makran, at half-an-hour after noon. The road this stage was better, but the station-master now informed me that I must have eight horses for the three next stages on account of the mud. I said I felt sceptical as to the necessity of so many horses, and I should complain if his report turned out untrue. Finally, I got off, with six horses only, and by 2 P.M. accomplished the stage very well to Sarwán, thirteen and a half versts. There was, however, an immense quantity of mud, and the horses floundered desperately in some places.

Sarwán station consisted of a filthy shed, into which the fierce heat of the sun bade me enter, while a sickening odour, and indescribable garbage, drove me back. Escaping as soon as possible, I got to the next station, Mughaulí, fifteen versts, at 4 P.M., where, behold a station and a station-master, but no eatables, nor drinkables, nor even water, and what was worse, no horses, but more garbage, and more smells than ever. The station-master vouchsafed me no

aid, but said a Baron Nicolai had taken my horses, and kept me waiting till 7 P.M., when I started for Sátogli, twenty-two versts, with horses which had just come from it, and were naturally disgusted at having to return without the usual allowance of food and rest. I got in at 10.15 P.M., and found a very tolerable station-house, built on an eminence. The road between these last two stations was over turf, or soft earth, where no accident could well occur, and the young moon did its part very brilliantly. About an hour and a half after leaving Mughauli, I passed a bridge called the *pont rouge*, built by the Persians, some two centuries back. It is of brick, and the incline is very steep.

Thus, in the first day, I accomplished seventy-five and a half versts, though at the expense of great fatigue and a feverish night. The heat was intense, and a Frenchman from Lyons I met at Mughauli, told me that a *compatriote*, who had come out on some commercial errand a few months ago, had just died near that place, of coup de soleil. He himself had been four years in the country, and had never been ill. He had just returned from Kárabágh, where he

had been sent by the Russian Government to examine the wheat. He said the cultivators did not use manure, and that the seed was bad, but that there was no reason why splendid wheat should not be produced.

On the 20th, I started at 7.15 A.M., and reached Husain Begli, twenty-five versts and a quarter, at 9.45 A.M. The road lay for the most part through a vast plain covered with cattle, horses, and sheep, and goats. The ground was very spungy, and there was deep mud in some places.

The station-house was a miserable wooden shed, and Yakúb, B——'s servant, who had been lent to me as guide, assured me that the inhabitants of the village were all thieves and murderers. I left their den at 10.15 A.M., and reached Huzum Tálá, seventeen versts and a half, at half-an-hour past noon. The station-house was being built.

At the next station, Istibaulák, seventeen versts, the post-house was under repair. I reached it at 2 P.M., and was obliged to take eight horses for the next stage, the road being muddy in some places, and in others frightfully stony, and very hilly. So severe

was the jolting, that Rahim was twice thrown from his seat, and my stone bottle of cognac, and a bottle of wine, were smashed.

I stopped to drink at a beautiful gushing spring, near Tcharupáne, the next station, thirteen versts and three quarters from Istibaulák, where, too, the station-house was under repair. Just before reaching it, I met the adjutant to the Governor of Erivan, going on twenty-eight days' leave to Russia. He had taken the horses posted for me, and very kindly and properly stopped and exchanged, so that I was able to go on to Deliján.

After this exchange it became dark, the moon was hid in clouds, and the road being overshadowed with trees, my driver would only go at a snail's pace, fearing to be overturned into some ravine, for we were entering the mountains. As I was very tired and ill, and in want of sleep, I stopped at an Armenian farmer's house by the side of the road, and asked to be taken in. Without more ado he showed me into a stifling den, built of wood and full of fleas and mice, where he obliged me with his most sweet company, and also with a nasal

performance, which scared from my eyelids the genius of sleep.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 21st of September, I started again and reached Deliján, eighteen versts from Tcharupáne at 8.15 A.M. The road was a series of ascents and descents with mountains on each side. I was on the look-out for a rock, which the adjutant I had met the day before told me had been brought down by the inundations. Midway to Deliján from the farmer's house, I saw it—an immense yellow rock that must have weighed a hundred tons. There did not seem to be any mountain near enough for the rock to have been brought down from it by the rains, so that I was obliged to take the matter entirely on faith.

I left Deliján at 9.30 A.M., and reached Chabuklí on the Gokchah Lake at twenty minutes after twelve. This stage was twenty versts. The road to within eight versts of the station was frightfully bad, the worst, in fact, I had ever seen. In places, indeed, the road—if road it could be called, where road was none—consisted of heaps of stones, as in the bed

of a furious torrent. My driver, whose temper was as rugged as the route, beat his horses unmercifully over the head by way of encouragement, and hurled large stones at them, though, to say the truth, his aim was not very good. I remonstrated with Yakúb at his allowing the Russian to be so brutal, but he declined to interfere. In fact, he was himself anything but an example of mercifulness. The day before, while the carriage was halting for a little, he had gone into a corn-field and was plucking the ears of corn, when three or four stout peasants showed themselves, and warned him off in a somewhat rough fashion. Yakúb kept them in play, till a Cossack who was with me as guard came up, and then turned upon them and demanded a man from among them as guide, not that I wanted one, but in pure spite, to give them trouble. The men pointed to the road, and said we had only to follow it, and that no guide was required. Hereupon, Yakúb set upon one of them, and beat him cruelly with a whip, the others not daring to interfere on account of the Cossack. Owing to my ignorance of Georgian, it was some time before I could understand

the cause of quarrel, or make Yakúb desist from flagellating the innocent rustic.

The scenery this day was truly romantic. At first a steep and rugged track winding through wooded mountains, whence came the blithe cry of the partridge, and then a long descent to the Gokchah Lake, called also the Lake of Siván, which I guessed to be about twenty-five miles in length, and from three to fifteen in breadth. Hills surround the lake on every side, but they are bare, and wood and smiling villages are wanted to make the landscape bright. The region has the chilled, deserted look of a scene in Tátary.

The station-house at Gokchah was a tolerable one, close to the northern shore of the lake. I was so ill and exhausted that I had to go to bed immediately, and employ in my own behalf such skill in pharmacy as I possessed.

I left Gokchah at 8 A.M. on the 22nd of September, feeling a little better, but still in great pain. Had I been well I could have passed a day at Gokchah very pleasantly. The air is delightfully cold: the water like ice, while in the winter months the road is often closed.

Even then patches of snow were visible on the hills, the lake being 6,000 feet above the sea. Our route took us along the western shore of the lake, up steep ascents and down again, skirting the edge of precipices from 200 to 400 feet above the water. I saw a few water-fowl, two of them swans, the others ducks. About seven versts from the Gokchah station we stopped opposite a small island, on which is the celebrated monastery described by M. Gille. In order to cross, it is necessary to summon a boat from the island by firing a gun, and as these preliminaries and the visit would have occupied hours, I gave up the idea of inspecting it. I arrived at Elenooka, fourteen versts, at 9.45 A.M. The last five versts the road was abominably stony, the whole country being strewn with lumps of pumice and sandstone from the size of a loaf to that of a millstone. One would suppose the lake to be the crater of an extinct volcano, whence, in primæval ages, these stones had been vomited forth in showers.

Elenooka is a Russian colony, and excellent butter, tolerable bread, eggs, and lake trout are procurable. The trout brought for my breakfast

weighed about 3 lbs., but I bought one kippered that must have weighed nearly eight. The people were so civil that I gave them three roubles extra as largesse. On this Yakúb and Rahím gave vent to many wise sayings on the excellence of liberality, and the latter in particular quoted with touching earnestness a *Hadís*, or "Saying" of the Prophet, which goes so far as to hint that generosity is a virtue that would almost save an infidel.

CHAPTER VII.

Elenooka to Fontanken—Mount Ararat—Erivan—Meeting a Friend—Nakshevân—The Persian Gates—Julfah—The Mihmandar—From the Aras to Marand—The Sultán in Distress—Sufiyán—Tabríz—Bahrám Mirza—The Sardár i Kull—Punishments of Persia—Mirza 'Abbás—The Russian Consulate—The fainting Fever—Snake-Charmers—The Armenian Burial-ground—The Blue Mosque and other Sights of Tabríz.

I LEFT Elenooka at 11 A.M. on the 22nd of September, and at 1 P.M. reached Nijni Akhtinskai, another Russian colony, fifteen versts from Elenooka. After Elenooka, the road leaves the Gokchah Lake, which, at that point, appears to be fifteen miles broad. The water is beautifully clear, and the bed is shingle, seemingly bits of pumice or lava. The road itself is stony in many parts, but there is very considerable cultivation on both sides of it. The village of Nijni is a labyrinth of corn-stacks, and carts are constantly passing, carrying away produce for sale. Russia has a boundless field for emigrants in

these regions, and the state of the few colonies she has already planted is well adapted to encourage other settlers.

From Nijni to Fontanken, twelve and a half versts, the road becomes more stony, and cannot be commended, and from Fontanken to Eiliar, sixteen and a half versts, it deserves execration. I reached Fontanken at 2.30 P.M., and Eiliar at 5 P.M. There the station-master said he had not horses enough for me, having given those that were posted for me to the lady of an officer. There was, therefore, nothing for it but to stop and sleep at the dirty little hovel, with only one room, which is dignified with the name of post-house.

I started at 6.20 on the morning of the 23rd of September, and my eyes were immediately gratified with the glorious sight of the two Ararats, the greater capped with snow, and seemingly but twenty miles off, though the real distance was over eighty. Few mountains in the world, perhaps, make so great an impression as Ararat, though not more than 17,000 feet high, for it has no rivals near to break the charm of its majesty.

The road was nothing better than the frightfully stony bed of a torrent, and how the carriage stood the bumps it encountered was to me a marvel. The distance from Eiliar to Erivan is sixteen versts, and we came along the last eight at a prodigious pace, reaching Erivan at 8.15 A.M. The descent to the town during the last mile or so is exceedingly steep, and the view grand in all its natural features: a vast plain and a vast mountain dwarf the artificial, that is, man's buildings, into absolute nothingness. For all that, taken by itself, Erivan is, not as an author has described it, "a large, dirty, ill-looking place," but rather a nice town, with abundance of trees, and plenty of clear water. The fort is very extensive, according to Kinneir, 6,000 yards in circumference. It is of an oval shape, and the walls seemed to me about twenty feet high, of burnt brick, and in good repair. General K——, the Governor of the province of Erivan, who was in charge of the frontier towards Persia, with the command of 12,000 men, had his head-quarters here. He is a first-rate officer, but of a very obstinate and imperious temper, and they say has been reduced to a lower

rank and raised again several times. I was told that on one occasion he met his match in obstinacy, and came off badly in the trial of tempers. He was driving to a party somewhere with his wife, and, it being very dark, the General fancied his coachman had taken a wrong turn, and abused him for it, telling him to change his direction. The man knew he was right, but, with Russian sullenness, gave no answer, and drove as directed. Suddenly the carriage began to bump and take perilous slants and pitches. In vain Madame K—— declared in favour of the man, and petitioned that he might go back and take his own way; the General would not change his order, and the man would say nothing, so after a few more rolls, as they were quite off the road, over they all went into a deep hole, where the General was well bruised, and poor Madame K—— had her arm broken.

Erivan is built on the Zengi River, which passes to the north-west, as does the Kur-Bulák River to the south. There is a precipice on the north-west side of the town, about 500 feet high, below which flows the Zengi. From the heights near the town, Uch-

miadzin, the famous "three churches" of the Armenian patriarch, is visible. I was too ill to go there, much as I wished it, for indeed there was but a finger's breadth between me and death at this time. Otherwise I would willingly have seen more of a city which is probably very ancient, and which has been the scene of remarkable feats of arms in more modern times, as in 1605 A.D., when it was taken from the Turks by Shah Abbás the Great, just before his memorable victory over Jághál-aghlou, after which twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty-five heads were laid before the conqueror. Within sight of Erivan, too, the great Nadir, in 1735, defeated an army of a hundred thousand Turks, and slew their general, winning back all Persian Armenia by the victory.

The station-house at Erivan was tolerably comfortable. I left it at 6.30 on the morning of the 24th of September, feasting my eyes on the lofty mountain of which I was not to lose sight all the day. The grand peak seemed steep at top, but a long ridge leads pretty well up to it. The snow-level

was well marked by the Lesser Ararat, which is 3,000 feet lower than the greater, and had not a flake on it. I found it less easy to realize the great height of Ararat from Erivan, than I did when I had gone farther from it. Having a capital yemtshik and good horses, we reached Kamarlu, twenty-seven versts and a half, at 8.20 A.M. Ararat then stood before us seemingly more vast and towering than when we started. On comparing it with the surrounding mountains, it certainly seemed three times higher than any of them. It impressed me more than anything I had seen since I left Constantinople. Certainly, after Jerusalem, there are few localities more interesting in a scriptural point of view than Ararat, and in itself it is a wonderful object. The first thing that struck me was the exceeding fitness of the place for the resting of the ark. On the very summit is a platform or terrace with three descents, and then a long ridge, giving the idea of a very practicable passage down to the lower hills. Then, the region below is so suited for tillage, and above all, for the culture of the grape, of which Noah seems to have set the example. *Apropos* of this, I observed an old man, a very

patriarch, with a grey beard, and a comely stripling, with black close curling locks, going forth to their work in the fields. They were just such figures as a painter might have taken for Noah and his son Ham.

Practicable as the ascent of Ararat looks, and proof though there be of its having been lately ascended, the belief in the country round is that no one but a disciple of the Saviour has ever been to the top. The legend saith that his prayers obtained for him permission to ascend, but that he never came back, and remains on the summit in a blissful trance. To look at the peak, however, one would not fancy a lengthened sojourn there desirable. There is not a tree nor a rock to shelter one, and, as Rahím said to me, it looks like a place from which a strong wind would blow a man away. On the side facing the road to Kamarlu, there is a tremendous yawning fissure, surmounted by perpendicular precipices, and thence to the summit was an unbroken line of snow. I continued to turn perpetually to gaze at this glorious mountain till the evening, and then at ninety versts distance it towered still, the monarch of all the

ranges around, and far above the Lesser Ararat, which when I was close seemed almost as high.

Our road passed all day over a level plain between mountains, with plenty of water, particularly at one place where the Arpachai River divides into seven beautiful limpid streams, full of trout, and gushing and rushing along like the trout streams of Devon.

Kamarlu is a fine large village, inhabited by a good-looking race. I had not seen so many pretty girls since I left Mingrelia as there. At 10.25 A.M. I reached Davalu, another large village eighteen versts from Kamarlu, and at 1.5 P.M. I was at Sadarak, eighteen versts and a half farther.

At 4.20 P.M. I got on twenty-two versts to Bach-Nurachín. I had now the prospects of being at Nakhshewan by 10 P.M., but unluckily there were no horses at Koragne, the next station, twenty-two versts, which I reached at 6.40. A tremendous wind was blowing, with clouds of dust, and this reconciled me to the halt. It was also a comfort to find a good, clean station, and for the first time since I left Teflis, I enjoyed a refreshing sleep. About six versts before reaching Koragne, I encountered several

hundred cut-throat looking fellows with large sticks, looking vastly more like chevaliers d'industrie than industrious labourers, as Yakúb called them. Several of them ran after us, and vociferated for largesse.

I left Koragne at 7.20 A.M. on the 25th of September. After going about six versts, I was overjoyed to see a European coming towards me in a carriole. It turned out to be Mr. Taylor, now consul at Diarbekir, whom I had known in England, and who had been vice-consul at Tehran. It was such a joy to shake hands with an Englishman in that far region, and get a large packet of letters and papers from England. Taylor has a knowledge of Arabic, which few Europeans ever possessed, and his transfer from Persia to Turkey was, therefore, a wise step.

At 9 A.M. I reached Buyuk Diez, fourteen versts, a clean, nice station, and at 11.15 A.M., I was at Nakhshewan, twenty versts further. I sent a letter from B—— to the *chef de district*, and that functionary forthwith presented himself, a careworn, meagre Armenian, who was very civil, and enriched me with a bottle of mediocre wine, receiving, of

course, double its value in exchange. To my dire disappointment, I now discovered that my seven and a half horse-loads of baggage which I had sent from Teflis on the 30th of August, and the carriage of which I had paid all the way to Tabríz, had been stopped by the Russian authorities at Julfah and brought back to Nakhshewan, on pretence of there being no pass for them from the custom-house people at the latter place. In vain the muleteer complained, and said the things were for the English mission at Tehran, which, indeed, was legibly indicated upon the boxes. The Russians would not listen to the muleteer, and abused, and at last beat him, on which he fled. I was obliged to pay the carriage over again to Tabríz, to put up with the delay and inconvenience, and could never get any redress.

Nakhshevân signifies "first halting-place," and is so called because Núh, so runs the tradition, stopped there first on descending from Ararat. The town was once very populous, and several men of eminence in Oriental history, as the learned Nimatullah, author of a noted dictionary, and Najmeddin, vazir of more than one of the dynasty of Seljuk,

have come from it. There are now, perhaps, 5,000 inhabitants, but the population is increasing. Not far from the station-house is a mosque with the famous minarets, which were restored by Kalb Ali Khan, a century or so ago, and are now again in want of repair. I left at 5.30 P.M., and walked a quarter of a mile to the right of the road to see the tomb of the Prophet Núh. It is in an Armenian burial-ground, situated close under the crumbling walls of the fort, and overlooking a mile or two of beautiful gardens with tall poplars and many other trees. The tomb is a simple white-plastered square brick building, about eight feet high, with a dome in the centre. There is an inscription in Georgian, which tells that it was restored in 1822. At the corners are niches for burning tapers; behind it is an ancient-looking room where prayers are read when a corpse is interred.

The hills and rocks about Nakhshewan are of very curious, fantastic shapes, some conical, others shaped like the paws of some monstrous animal. They are utterly treeless, and of a most forbidding aspect. Several horsemen were sent with me to the

frontier from Nakhshewan as escort, and one of them told me that he had visited these rocks, and that there were panthers and other wild beasts to be found there. We drove along at a good rate, and reached Alandjakchai, twenty versts, at 8 P.M. Here the rocks by moonlight looked exactly like ruined forts; and now commenced a region of a character so wild and weird as seen by the pale moonlight, that the imagination might well have peopled it with Faust's witches. A tremendous wind was blowing, which accorded with the strange character of the scenery. There is a sheer descent this whole stage of fifteen versts to the Aras, and a similar gorge leads down to the river from the Persian side; hence, no doubt, the tempestuous wind which is so constant at this spot. Down the long groove of this descent we sped rapidly along against the rushing wind, the force of which was so increased by the rapidity of our movement as almost to deprive us of breath. Across the road ran many lines of hills, looking like walls. Beyond this, far in the distance, rose a gigantic range of blue mountains, the portal or the barrier of Iran.

Right in the centre, opposite to us, was a deep cleft, a sort of stupendous gateway into Persia.

After passing many lines of hills at right angles to the road, we entered the wildest pass I ever beheld. It is not above a quarter of a mile broad, and on either side, to the height of several hundred feet, rise perpendicular rocks, with vast boulders scattered here and there, and deep clefts at intervals, where it would seem a handful of banditti, securely posted, might stop an army. The pass itself is strewn all over with great stones, and appears to be the bed of a river, though the small stream on the left, which rushes swiftly onward to the Aras, must be many times magnified to be worthy of such a channel. In the rains, no doubt, this rivulet becomes a mighty flood, sweeping all before it. The pass is several miles long, and opens like a funnel on the broad Aras, really a fine river in some places, and which, even when I crossed it, was thirty feet deep, and from 100 to 150 yards broad. At the mouth of the pass the hills form a semicircle, and, just at the end, looking like an emblem of Terminus, is a huge pyramidal rock, and four smaller of the same shape. It seemed to me the

very beau ideal of a frontier pass, just where Rustam, the Persian Hercules, and the white Dív might have held their deadly tournament.

It was 1 A.M. of the 26th of September before I got to bed at the quarantine station at Julfah, and at 5 A.M. I was again on foot. I now dismissed B——'s servant Yakúb with a present of sixteen roubles, and sent him off rejoicing. An Armenian at the station said to me that Persia was in want of a prime minister, and that there were only two men fit for the post, Farrukh Khan, the Amínu'd daulah, and the Mustanfiu'l Mamàlik. Julfah, he said, was healthy, but *triste*, and plagued with black scorpions and tarantulas. A soldier had been bitten lately by a tarantula, and a few months before that, a child, three years old, had died from the sting of a scorpion. He said, too, that he himself had been bitten by the Miyáni bug, and had suffered much, the symptoms being great drowsiness and an intensely bitter taste on the tongue.

At 10 A.M. the quarantine master gave me a tolerable breakfast, and among the eatables figured two small, but well-tasted fish, called Kárámul. I

had now a visit from Ihtiram Beg, the officer who had been deputed by the Persian Government as Mihmándár, or "guest receiver," to meet me. With him was Muhammad Beg, a gholam, or courier of the mission, who had attended Taylor, and who was left for me. At 1 P.M. I crossed the Aras in a huge ferry-boat, and, after nearly three months of sickness and suffering, found myself in Persia. Nearly opposite the quarantine station is the Persian guardhouse, and there sundry doings were enacted in my favour, such as the presentation of fruit, the turning out of the guard, the gathering together of the greybeards of the place. In return I endeavoured to be courteous, and, as I really was pleased, and tried to please in turn, I very likely succeeded. I gladly turned my back on Julfah and its few poor huts, and wondered, as I rode from it, whether it was from it Shah Abbás the Great named the famous Armenian quarter of Ispahán, when he depopulated Armenia in 1603, and carried to his capital so many thousands of Armenian captives.

The sun was intensely hot, which did not improve my meditations, and my horse was lame. It was 3.30 P.M. before we reached Gargir, a small

village on the left hand to one entering Persia, and about two farsakhs from the Aras. The crops of this place, the people told us, had been destroyed by floods. There a tremendously black thunder-storm gathered on our left, and came crashing on towards us. I set my horse to the gallop, and went on as hard as I could up a pass, without the vestige of a road, over great stones, for five or six miles. This was not very pleasant, but I escaped the storm by it, which passed behind me, and by degrees the deep-toned thunder sank to a mutter in the distance. Emerging from the pass, which in old times was a noted one for brigands, I found the bright sun again, and rode some six miles more to Galand Kayah, a large village, five farsakhs from Julfah, where I was to halt for the night. The place was said to be rich, but the inhabitants were evidently of those who husband their resources, for no tea was procurable, nor was there any butter, nor could a glass or a chair be found in the whole place. I slept in an upper room, open to all the winds of heaven, and the breeze was not slight, nor did it come "o'er a bed of violets." The room had two

open windows, a great hole in the roof, and a door that would not shut. I got on pretty well, however, and made a light supper on a pint and a half of *eau sucrée*. This was my first lodging in Persia, and all that could be said for it was, that it was better than what I had sometimes had in Russia. I recorded two first impressions, that the Persians are evidently very fond of air, and that at the first glance there appears little reason for their villages and towns being in one place more than another. There is nothing like what a European would call a desirable site for men to collect in, no natural vegetation, no woods, no navigable rivers. This remark, I afterwards found to be true of the table-land of Persia, though it does not apply to the Caspian provinces.

I rose at 4 A.M. on September the 27th, and at 6 A.M. was on a better horse than that of the day previous, and *en route* for Marand, about twenty miles from Galand Kayah. The road lay for miles over a plain, between mountains, and covered with the *shuran*, or camel-thorn, then flowering, a useful plant, which all animals accept. The mihmándár

pointed out a village in the hills to the left as the parent of all the villages about. He said it was very old, and that the inhabitants spoke a peculiar language of their own. The morning air was fresh and pleasant, and I cantered on for some miles, and about 8.30 A.M. came to a hovel with good water near, and a fine melon garden, isolated in the middle of the plain, looking like nature's own public refreshment table. Here I alighted, and discovered an old Turk in the hovel, who was lord of the melon-garden, and presently apprised me that the melons were not to be had gratis. After tasting three of exquisite flavour, and paying four times their value, I rode on.

The sun was now very hot, and the wind increased to a perfect hurricane, with clouds of dust. It was noon before we reached Marand, a fair village —almost a town—bosomed in trees, and with high mountains full of game close by.

The governor's *farrásh báshí*, "chief of the carpet-spreaders," a very useful functionary in Persia, who looks after the arrangements for camping, and sees the bastinado administered to offenders, was

waiting outside the village with five or six servants to receive me, and conducted me to the kází's house, where I was shown an upper room, open to the winds, but a decided improvement on the den at Galand Kayah. The kází, Mirza Rabbí, a pleasant, cheerful man, came and talked to me a little. At night he came again, and sat by me while I ate my puláo. He told me his salary was 140 tumans, about 65*l.* a year, and that it had just been reduced one-fourth, and he prayed me to use my good offices to get it made up to its former amount. After dinner, Rustam Khan, son of Mehdí Khan, the governor, a pretty Kájár boy, came to see me. He was but twelve years old, but he acted the man very well, and looked as grave as possible.

It is an inconvenience of Persian travelling that one must rise so very long before the actual departure, in order to allow one's bed and baggage to be packed. I was up again at 4 A.M. on the 28th, and in the saddle at 6.30. I rode softly out of the town, and then remembering the scorching sun of the last stage, I set off and cantered or galloped the whole way to Súfiyán, five farsakhs,

or about eighteen miles. The road is good, but in places stony, and the Marand river is crossed several times, a broad stream, which, in winter, must be a difficulty. While galloping along I was pursued by some enormous shepherd dogs, who came rushing at my horse without caring much for the thong of my hunting whip. While I was trying to get rid of them, a horseman of my escort rode up and said, "Do not strike them; they are only doing their duty, which is to bark at strangers." I took a look at my mentor, and observed that he was a fine, tall soldier-like man, well mounted, but shabbily dressed, and began to talk to him. Among other things, I asked him his rank. "I was," said he, "a súltán (captain) in the artillery. Now I am as you see me. They would not give me my pay: I asked for it boldly, and they degraded me. They are dogs! they do not know a soldier's worth." He then went on to say that the Persian artillery had learned all they knew from the English, from Lindsay and others. Since these officers went the Persian troops had been constantly deteriorating. "I will go with an Englishman," he added, "anywhere, and I do

not want to serve the Persian Government any longer."

Súfiyán is a pretty village, with a tolerable upper room in the post-house, where legions of flies were waiting to receive me, and showed me more attention than I wished.

The custom of scribbling on walls and trees is even more common in Persia than in England; but there is this difference, that in Persia it is very rare that anything indelicate meets the eye. In this respect Europe makes a degrading figure as compared with Persia, where scribblers seldom go beyond a quotation from Hafiz, or other favourite writers. At Súfiyán, some one willing to show his learning had written the English alphabet over the door.

After eating some delicious grapes, the little sort called kishmish, and the red and white sáhibí, I mounted at 2 P.M., with a hot sun, but cool wind. I remarked along the road abundance of rivulets, which in the rains are no doubt large streams. At 4 P.M. I reached a white domed building, which marks the mid-distance, and at 6 P.M. I arrived at Tabríz.

As we were approaching the city, Rahim rode up to me with a most satisfied look, and asked me what I thought of it. I replied, "What do you think of it now you have seen Paris and London?" "By your blessed head," said he, "I think it is larger and finer than Paris; as for London, it is the mother of cities, we all know that." It was no use to argue with Rahim's patriotism and conceit, so I rode on, thinking that Tabriz formed a good example of what I had remarked at Galandkáyah, that Persian towns are built on sites which have nothing to recommend them save the facility of drawing water by kanáts from adjacent hills.

On the left of the road, to the traveller approaching Tabríz, there is nothing to strike the eye but some barren hills of a red colour. To the right there are several villages and long patches of cultivation, until a great oblong of gardens and houses is reached, perhaps two miles and a half in length. This is Tabríz, with its 200,000 inhabitants. It appears shut in between mountains, those on the right of the road being several thousand feet high. Tabríz itself is upwards of 4,000 feet above the sea,

and the mountains near it are some of them three times higher.*

The trade of Tabríz is considerable. The imports *viâ* Turkey alone are of the value of $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions of pounds sterling. On these five per cent. customs are levied, and form a fund from which the Shah pays his diplomatic salaries. The value of the exports to Turkey amounts to about 600,000*l.*; to Russia, produce to the value of 400,000*l.* is sent in the legitimate way, and the like amount by smuggling, while the imports thence are about 40,000*l.* The chief imports are British, and some Swiss, coloured cotton manufactures, and British gray calicoes, broadcloth, and miscellaneous goods from Germany. Silk is the principal export. The revenue yielded by Azurbáiján amounts to half a million, and the province furnishes 23,000 infantry, 4,000 artillery, and 5,000 irregular cavalry to the Shah's army, and could supply, on emergency, double that number.

The climate of Azurbáiján, as might be expected from the great elevation of the country above the sea,

* See Appendix.

is not very objectionable on account of heat. There are many beautiful and salubrious districts, but the cold in winter is intense. Water is the great desideratum, and a jet the thickness of a man's little finger sells for 1*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* per annum.

To return now to my entrance into Tabríz. I can truly say I have seen few more agreeable things than the first object which there met my eyes, viz. an Englishman riding out to meet me. I had not left Stamboul so very long, yet still, *soit dit sans reproche*, I had contracted a surfeit of foreigners, and right glad I was to find myself once more speaking English, and riding beside Mr. Consul-General Abbott, to be his guest at the Consulate. In the midst of my happiness the unsympathizing sky began to weep in such good earnest that we were fain to put spurs to our horses, and press forward. The road was a vile one, full of holes, and bordered with mud quarries, that is, with pits, twenty feet deep, from which the earth had been taken to build the city. Presently we came to a narrow lane, blocked up with an endless string of camels. Our servants shouted to the drivers to make way, instead

of which, with evident ill intention, they drove their great lumbering animals against us. Thereupon the irascible Rahím, "merciful" in name only, began to use his stick on the shoulders of a camel man, who replied with his cudgel, and several of his brethren ran up with huge sticks to aid him. We escaped a general fight by pouring the oil of conciliation on these troubled waters, but this trifling incident gave me an idea of the temper of the Tabrízís. They are, in fact, a bold, turbulent race, and no respecters of persons.

At last we reached the city ditch, deep, dark, and dirty, and passing through the gate where a few soldiers—fine men, but badly dressed—showed themselves, we arrived at the British Consulate. It is a spacious residence, with some fifteen rooms, all on the same floor, for there is no second story, and with stabling for thirty-two horses. There are, as in all Persian houses of mark, an outer and an inner court, with a smiling garden, and a few fine trees in each. It is, in fact, a house fit for a British Consul-General, and superior, as it ought to be, to that of the Russian functionary of the same grade, which is

situated close by. *En revanche*, the Russian Consul-General is far better paid, having some eighteen hundred a year to the Englishman's eight. This ought not to be; the English Consul-General ought to have at least fifteen hundred a year, so as to be able in the matter of display to sit well on the skirts of his Russian colleague and rival.

The last day of September fell on a Sunday, so resting that day, I mounted at 2.30 P.M. on the 1st of October, to pay visits to the Prince-Governor of Azurbáiján, the Sárdár i Kull, or Commander-in-Chief, of the province, and the Dabir, who is the Foreign-Office agent. I went first to Bahrám Mirza, the Prince-Governor. My ride gave me no agreeable impression of a Persian city. Narrow lanes filled with holes, pits, ditches, and filth; houses of mud, many of them reduced by the late rains to ruinous heaps; close, dark, and dirty bazars, roofed over with sticks; mangy miserable dogs, and more miserable mendicants, were the sights that greeted me. The human mind is elastic, however, and grows reconciled even to these things, and before I left Persia, I found myself reasoning in the following

fashion:—Earth is cheap, and a new house of mud may be constructed for many years successively for the cost of one European house; in a mud house one is safe from fire, no mean consideration in an atmosphere where everything is as dry as tinder, where strong winds are constant, and water scarce; further, a thick roof of mud keeps off heat better than a thin one of slates or tiles. On the other hand, it must be admitted that a dirt house can never be very clean, and that it harbours ants, fleas, scorpions, and every sort of noxious insect.

The prince, I found, was lodged in the ark or citadel, the "*arx*" of the Latins, a building of some antiquity. Having walked through several passages, I found myself in the room with the prince. Bahrám Mirza is the fourth son of the famous 'Abbás Mirza, whose premature death on the 22nd of October, 1833, was such a loss to Persia. The eldest son was Muhammad Shah, late King of Persia, and father of the present Shah. The second son is Bahman Mirza, a man of great ability, who for many years has been in exile at Shíshah, in Kárábágh, under the protection of Russia, but who was

Governor of Azurbáiján. The third son, Kahrawán Mirza, died at Tabríz, where he too was governor. The fifth son is Sultán Murád Mirza,* Governor of Khurásán, of whom more hereafter.

Bahrám Mirza was not in the room when I entered, but I was shown to a chair, about six paces from that placed for him, on the same carpet, but a foot or so to his right, that is, lower down. One person was present, Kuli Khán. The room was handsome, with paintings of ladies, birds, and flowers on the walls.

When the prince entered, I rose and bowed, and waited till he gave me a sign to sit. He asked me first of my journey, then of Sir H. Rawlinson, who, he said, was an old friend and comrade. He then asked me about our relations with China. I said I thought we might take Pekin, but that it would be difficult to hold so vast a city. This seemed to please him, and he said, when the Russians took Tabríz they found they could not hold it. Our conversation lasted twenty minutes. I was favourably

* There are other princes of this illustrious house whose names will be found in Appendix II.

impressed with the prince, whose manners are gentlemanly and dignified. He had an evident leaning to the English, as indeed have all Persians who came in contact with the officers we sent to Persia in the good old times. Of these none made a deeper impression than Major Hart and Sir Henry Lindsay, of both of whom many anecdotes are told. One of these stories is the counterpart of that told of Wellington and Picton, and shows that *bon mots, comme les hommes de talent, n'ont pas de patrie.* Hart was a severe disciplinarian, and several times inflicted extra drill, arrest, and other punishments on the young princes. One of these complained to Abbás Mirza, that the English commandant had threatened him with some severity if a certain neglect of duty occurred again.

"Did Hart Sáhib really say he would punish you in that way?" said the heir apparent.

"Yes, he did, indeed," replied the prince, in full expectation that his cause would be taken up.

"Well, then," said Abbás Mirza, "I advise you to be very careful, for if Hart said he would do it, he most certainly will keep to his word."

I went next to the house of the Sárdár i Kull,

which was not far off. The Sárdár is a very old and faithful servant of the Government. His name is Azíz Khán. He is a Kurd and a Sunni, not a man of good family, but raised by merit to be Adjudán Báshi, or chief of the Shah's adjutants, and then promoted by the celebrated minister, Takí Khan, to be Commander-in-Chief, which office he held during our war with Persia. He is a large brawny man, with bloodshot eyes, and inflamed features, and did not strike me as one who would greatly err on the side of leniency. In fact, I was told that he had lately walled up fourteen robbers, two of them with their heads downward, and so left them to perish. This sounds cruel, but how many monks and nuns have been walled up in Europe, and Christianity is a religion of love, whereas Islám is not. Persian punishments are cruel, and they are meant to be so, for what says the Persian proverb, "A soft file will not cleanse deep-seated rust."

My conversation with the Sárdár was almost entirely about China, and he seemed much interested and amused with what I told him. I sat on a chair exactly opposite him, and not two feet off, in a room

he has built entirely of wood, which it is supposed would not be thrown down by an earthquake. Such a room is a desideratum at the British Consulate, for the day will certainly come when Tabríz will again be destroyed by an earthquake. The longer such a catastrophe is delayed, the more we ought to be on the look out for it. The Europeans there sleep, as I did myself, without a thought of danger, but history tells us that the calamity is a recurring one.

My last visit was to the Dabir, Mirza Abbás, a very clever, shrewd man, with a black beard, a Jewish countenance, and Russian propensities. His talk was of St. Petersburg, where he had resided some time. He does not like the English, and despises them. The conversation turning on the cholera, he said it was not very fatal now, that epidemics in process of time grew old and effete, and, as it were, sickened.

In returning, I called on Dr. Cormick, a European in the Shah's service, who has long resided at Tabríz. I found him sitting with the Máků chief, the Rob Roy of Persia. The father levies black mail, and though often sent for by the Shah, has always

refused to go to Tehran. At last the Shah took away from him the colonelcy of a regiment he had given him. However, he made his peace with the Shah when his Majesty came last year to Tabríz, by presenting a *pishkash*, or offering of 3,000 túmáns.

On the 3rd of October I sent off my baggage to Tehran. On the 6th I returned the call of the Russian consul-general, M. Tchernichieff. The *salle de réception* is, perhaps, a better room than any at the English Consulate, but in every other respect the Russian residence is inferior. On the other hand, the Russians have a charming country retreat, while the English must put up with tents.

Evil rumours now reached us of the advance of the cholera from Southern Persia towards Tehran, and of the outbreak of that singular disease, the *Tab-i-ghash*, or, "fainting fever," in several districts near Tabríz.* This disease is described by one who had sad experience of its deadly character as "an ague which never comes out," and he adds that bleeding is the only remedy.

* See Appendix III.

On the 8th, a celebrated afsúngar, or "snake-charmer," named Mirza Kásim, came to exhibit his skill. He produced three boxes, containing some twenty snakes in all, and told us that except one they were *Af'aa* vipers. The exception was a thin snake, about a yard long, with remarkably large eyes. He called it *chiryá már*, "sparrow-killer." The vipers were, some of them, four and a half, perhaps even five feet long, of a gray ashen colour, with black blotches, and the belly red, like cŏpper. He handled them all with great confidence, slipping his fingers along their bodies, and grasping them so that they could not turn their heads. Presently he opened the mouth of one of the largest, and showed its fangs, crooked teeth half an inch long. These distilled poison, which he received on the blade of a knife, till there was about a quarter of a teaspoonful. A little of this dropped on the ground, but he put the rest in his mouth, and licked the knife. He then took a fowl and pulled the feathers off the wretched bird's thigh, and then suffered the snake to bite it. I watched his proceedings carefully, and, I think—but am not certain—that the snake whose

poison he swallowed was the one that bit the fowl. However that may be, the leg of the poor fowl swelled instantaneously, and it raised it incessantly as if in pain. Once it clucked a little, but soon became giddy, and rolled off the platform into the garden below. It was quite dead in a few seconds under the minute. The bitten part became black. I noticed that the assistant who held the snake seemed afraid of it, and threw it down hastily, after it had made the bite. In fact, so alarmed was he, that he threw it close to one of Mr. Abbott's children, who displayed more courage than the "snake-charmer," and did not attempt to retreat.

Meantime, Mirza Kásim himself was no whit disconcerted, and took up with perfect *sang froid* the reptile that had showed itself so venomous. I said: "You are an afsúngar, 'a sorcerer;' if you have the welfare of mankind at heart, utter a spell that all the snakes in Persia may die at once." "Nay," replied he, "not so; for should the snakes die, how should I get my bread?" He then showed me his diplomas of investiture as snake-charmer, signed by the Murshids, or spiritual guides of the

profession; and dated seventeen years back. He next offered to let the snakes bite two boys he had with him, about fourteen years old, who advanced rather reluctantly to be operated upon, and bared their arms for the bite. Of course we had no intention of allowing such a cruelty, but I suffered the Mirza to take out the chirámár, or thin snake, with which he proposed to inflict the wound, and I then interposed. This creature was probably venomless, and I felt sure that the charmer would neither himself have sustained a bite from the vipers, nor would have dared to inflict one on his slaves or apprentices. I paid him five kirans, about 4*s*. 9*d*., for his performance, with which he was well satisfied.

Before quitting Tabríz, I had the pleasure of meeting nearly all the European community at a farewell dinner, given by the representative of the house of those Rothschilds of the East, the Rallis. There was a Greek bride, young, tall, and handsome; there, a Madame M——. She spoke of the dulness of Tabríz, and sighed for Stamboul. There was also present another very pretty lady, half German, half Hungarian. Her husband was

proud of his English, and said to me, "You not stop long in Tabríz, *I hope?*" When I had acquiesced, he proceeded, "I like English much, but 'tis too difficile a language—there is too much *circumcision* in English." Having ascertained that he meant circumlocution, I tried to get him to speak his own tongue, but he was too anxious to show his proficiency in mine, and went on to discuss the late events in Syria, and said, "You feel for the poor people that are being *massacrated, I hope.*" I could not help replying, "I feel more for the English being *massacrated* in Persia." He said, "I did not hear of that," and looked puzzled.

The walks about Tabríz, if not beautiful, at least afford chances of a shot at bustard and sand grouse. In one promenade we visited a garden house, which, twenty years ago, was occupied by Mr. Woodfall, Colonel G. Powlett Cameron, and other English officers. The house is in the Italian style, and has been pretty. It was sad to see it almost a ruin, the fountain dry, and the garden desolate, but no sooner is a mansion empty in Persia than it goes to absolute decay.

It is a foible of mine to visit the cemeteries wherever I go—a gloomy foible, no doubt. One of my walks was to the Armenian burial-ground at Tabríz. This lies near the Red Hills, and beyond the *Bágh i Shimál*, or North Garden, a garden of truly gigantic dimensions, containing 3,000 kharmans—200 acres. At the cemetery I noticed the tomb of Regina, wife of Richard White Stevens, consul at Tehran. This lady died of cholera at Súfiyán, and Dr. Cormick's brother, who is buried close by, died at the same time of the same fell disease. There are also the tombs of Dr. Cormick's father, of — Christian, Esq., of Mr. R. Burgess, of the Comte Perrigaux, second secrétaire de la Mission Française, and several others. Dr. Cormick was the favourite physician of 'Abbás Mirza, and thoroughly understood his constitution. Had he been with the prince in Khurásán in 1833, that life, so precious to Persia, might have been saved.

The buildings at Tabríz are far less striking than might have been expected in so famous a city. Close to the gate from which one passes to the Tehran road is a fine ruin called the Kabúd Masjid, or "blue

mosque." It is about 300 years old, and the blue tiles from which it gets its name are beautifully arabesqued. The ark is a noble building, of burnt brick, but the walls are cracked in many places by earthquakes. I remarked there a radical defect in Persian architecture, viz., there being no keystone to the arch. There is a tower in the ark about seventy feet high, from which, it is said, unfaithful ladies used to be thrown. *On dit* that one of them was buoyed up by her clothes, and alighted safely on her feet, after which the custom was abandoned. The Tabrízís; it must be admitted, do not bear the best of characters, and Sadi, among others, was very severe upon them.

CHAPTER VIII.

From Tabríz to Turkumánchái—The Treaty of 1828—Miyáni—Poisonous Bugs—Jamalábád—Zanjánah—Sultániyah—Kazvín—The Palace of Sulaimániyah—Arrival at Tehran.

LITTLE know the pampered children of the West—they who ride on the wings of steam, and slumber as they ride—of the pains and penalties which attend a journey beyond the Hiddekel and the Araxes. I was weak and ill, but there was no alternative but to mount the ponies, good, bad, and indifferent, of the Chappar Khánah, or post-office, and wend my way, in heat, or rain, or storm, as the case might be, over another 350 miles of rough road to Tehran. I might, had I been well and strong, have accomplished this in four or five days, riding Tátar fashion, without baggage, and almost without food. As it was, I had to make stages of fifty miles a day, and submit to a thousand disagreeables, doubly annoying to an invalid.

At 6.30 A.M. on the 15th of October, I sent on a cook I had engaged at Tabríz to the second stage on the road to Tehran, Háji Aghá, with orders to prepare dinner for me there. I started myself at 10 A.M., receiving in charge the mail-bags for the English and French Missions, which I took, not without qualms as to their speedy delivery. The first stage to Saiyidábád is called four farsakhs, but appeared to be a good, or rather a bad, twenty miles, over a detestably stony road, where no man with any bowels of compassion would put a horse out of a walk. I reached Saiyidábád, a pretty rural village, with a tolerable post-house, near a grove, at a quarter to two P.M. Rahím contrived to make some tea, and I rested till 3.30, the sun being very powerful. The horses we now mounted were bad, and mine in particular was very troublesome, and I could hardly get him up a steep hill, or rather little mountain, over which the road lies on quitting Saiyidábád. In general the path was very stony, and at about two-thirds of the way there was a *Gadak*, or "pass between hills," after getting through which it grew dark, and, by the time we arrived at the second station, Háji Aghá, about

fifteen miles from Saiyidábád, the darkness was such that but for Rahím's white horse jogging on before me, I should, no doubt, have ridden into some pit. At the little hamlet of Háji Aghá I passed a miserable night, half thinking I should be compelled by illness to return to Tabríz.

On the 16th we were in the saddle at 7.30 A.M., and reached Dáwatgar, a long six farsakhs, or twenty-four miles, at 10.40 A.M. Luckily I had a capital horse, and the fresh morning breeze was very exhilarating. The road, too, was good for galloping—light earth, which would not be so pleasant in the rains. About half way, on the right hand, we passed Tikmatash, a large village, where there used to be a station. Between this place and Dáwatgar a Russian courier was robbed two years before my transit. The thieves were caught and punished. I observed a fair sprinkling of villages throughout the stage. There is no village at Dáwatgar, but a fine kárwánsarái of 'Abbás the Great. Last year a room in it was thrown down by an earthquake. It was of solid brick, and several persons were crushed under the ruins. The rooms in the kárwánsarái are dark and dirty, and full of flies and fleas; but the

station-master was civil, and did all the little in his power to be useful. He lent me a tea-cup, and scrubbed it well after I had done with it, to get off the pollution left by my infidel lips. We were detained some time for horses; and a *shágird chappar*, or ostler, who came in from Turkumánchái, would not let us have his horses, alleging that return horses were not bound to do work till they had had two feeds. Hereupon the station-master at Dáwatgar set on the contumacious ostler and beat him cruelly, flinging large stones at him, and bruising him all over. Rahím likewise cuffed him, till I interfered. When the point had been carried, I was surprised to see the ostler join our party and make himself most useful; and I could not forbear giving him a handsome present, on which he said, "The blows I have eaten are now, *halál*, lawful."

The Dáwatgar station-master warned us at starting to keep with the baggage till we had crossed a river four miles off, thinking that the road was not so safe as it should be. Rahím, who never admitted any statement to the detriment of Persia, maintained that this warning was quite uncalled for, as no danger

existed. However, when we got to Turkumánchái, we found a Kafilah, or caravan there, which kept firing off guns continually, a precaution rather at variance with Rahím's declaration as to the honesty of the people about. Turkumánchái is a fine village, six farsakhs, or twenty-four miles, from Dáwatgar. We reached it at 5.30 P.M.; but my cook, Ali Akbar, did not come in till an hour after. The road lay over very broken ground in some places, with steep descents.

At Turkumánchái are sometimes found the venomous bugs, whose head-quarters are at Miyáni—and of which more anon. That which has made the place famous is the signing of the treaty which concluded the last war between Persia and Russia. The Russian forces had reached the Kaflán Kúh, on the frontiers of Azurbáiján, towards Tehran, when this treaty was signed, on the 22nd of February, 1828, the plenipotentiaries on the Russian side being Jean Paskevitch and Alexandre Obrescoff, and on the Persian, 'Abbás Mirza, the heir apparent to the throne of Persia. On that day the Treaty of Gulistan, made on the 12th of October, 1813, was superseded, and the King

of Persia bestowed on his enemies, the Russians, the Khanates of Erivan and Nakhshewan, and undertook to pay five millions of túmáns, or upwards of two millions sterling.

I left Turkumánchái at 8.30 A.M. on the 17th, and reached Miyáni, or, as the natives call it, Miyánaj, at 1 P.M., the distance being six farsakhs, or twenty-four miles. I had a bad, stumbling horse, and the road was full of ascents and descents. As long as the air was fresh with the breath of morning, I got on well, but a farsakh from Miyáni it became intensely hot. We descended from the mountains into an arid plain, watered, it is true, by a river, but the river itself nearly dried up by the heat.

Just before going down into this *enfer*, I encountered a party of well-dressed Persian horsemen, and on asking who they were, was told that it was Muhammad Ghafár Khán, going to Petersburg as *Elchi*. I was, by this time, very tired, and had the ill fortune to get among an interminable caravan of at least a thousand mules. The rocks near the river are very picturesque, and Miyáni is a handsome-looking town, but full of the bug that kills travellers,

yet does the natives no harm. The station-house was new, and the post-master assured me that there was no danger of being bitten, but on my asking to see the bugs, a dozen were brought with ominous readiness. The man who brought them held them in his hand, the skin of which seemed to me rather harder than horn, but he kept stirring them up with a piece of stick to prevent them, as he said, from biting. They are horrid creatures, with long legs and sharp snouts.* I popped them all into a bottle of spirits to preserve them.

The upper room at the post-house was occupied by several Persians. One of them was very ill with fever, and I was besought to cure him.

I set off from Miyáni at 2.30 P.M. The road lay at first over a plain, then crossed the river by a fine bridge of brick, and passed thence over the Kaflán Kúh, or Mountain of the Leopard, a range of hills which divide the province of Azurbáiján from that of Khamsah. These hills appeared to me about 1,000 feet high. A good road was being constructed

* See Appendix.

over them, about forty feet broad, with a foundation of stone, and a gutter on either side. The real boundary of the provinces is the river Kizil Uzan, which runs in the middle of the hills. I saw some partridges close to the roadside, and heard the cry of others in several places. At 5 P.M. I got to Jamalábád, three farsakhs and a half, or twelve miles. There there was no village, but a noble, though somewhat ruinous, kárwánsarái of burnt brick, built by Shah 'Abbás. It is a square, with two fine arches facing east and west. The walk on the roof is perhaps 800 feet in length, by 80 broad. The station-master, a man between sixty and seventy, said there had been no earthquake in his recollection, so that the dilapidations in the building were owing to that *fons et origo* of all evils in Persia—neglect.

The best room in the *sarái* was occupied by the station-master's family, but they turned out on my arrival, and I was invited to make myself as comfortable as the remaining occupants of the chamber would allow me to be. Seeing that the felt rugs, with which the floor was carpeted, were thick with the grime of years, I thought it best to eschew them

as seats, and was just going to deposit myself on what appeared to be a bundle of clothes, when a faint cry caused me to revert with a jerk to an upright attitude. On closer examination, it appeared that a wee epitome of human nature was contained in the centre of the bundle, and that the bundle itself rested on a swing cradle, which certainly would have come down with a crash under my weight. On looking about for some one to relieve me of this embarrassing *poupon*, I spied a girl, about thirteen, peeping at me from the end of the passage, evidently wanting to carry off the baby, but afraid to encounter the ogre of a Firingí; so I put two silver coins into the little fist, and went up on the roof for a minute. When I returned I found the bait had taken, and that the bundle had departed. All about the room were *tilisms*, or charms, to keep off the evil eye; such as bunches of rue, texts of the Kurán sewn up in red cloth, and sundry smart cards taken from Russian wares, which were designed to attract buyers, not to frighten fairies.

At 8.30 on the morning of the 18th, I left Jamalábád, and cantered on to Sarcham, three

farsakhs, or ten and a half miles, in an hour. Both Rahím's horse and my own were excellent, and the ride was a real pleasure. I left Sarcham, which is a small village with a very poor post-house, at 10 A.M., and at noon arrived at the pretty isolated station of Ak Mazár, "the white tomb," about twelve miles from Sarcham. The road was stony and treeless, passing along the bank of a broad river-channel, in which, at that season, flowed only a tiny rivulet of excellent water. The sun was intensely hot, and the glare blinding. The station-master told me the "white tomb" was that of an Armenian saint, which circumstance, and the existence of the tomb itself, I was obliged to take on trust, as, though he pointed to where it was in the distance, I could not see it.

At 3.30 A.M. on the 19th, I sent off the cook, and mounting myself at 6, reached Nikpih, three and a half farsakhs (twelve miles), over a fair road, stony in places, at 7.30 A.M. My horse was an excellent one, and at the end of the stage, on my giving him the spur, he went off like the wind, and quite ran away with me to the station. This surprised me the more, as he appeared to be lame

when he walked. In this ride I met three Persian horsemen, one of whom turned round and made faces, calling out something abusive. The poisonous bug is said to be found at Nikpih, which is a moderate-sized village, with a large, ill-kept post-house.

The horse they gave me at Nikpih was a tall, strong-looking animal. Rahím praised it immensely, probably to delude me into not taking his, which I soon found to be much better, for my animal was a perfect slug. The more I spurred and whipped, the more he would not go, but as I had begun the struggle I was determined not to give in, though I was desperately tired, and my hunting-whip went to pieces in the overture to the performance.

On his part, my horse having come to the conclusion that I was a nuisance, made several efforts to get rid of me, and at last rushed against a mule that was soberly stepping along under the weight of two huge boxes, and nearly dislodged me with the shock. In spite of all this, however, and the stoniness of the road in some places, I got into Zanjánah, which is twenty-two miles from Nikpih, at 11 A.M.

Zanjánah, the capital of the Province of Khamsah,

"Five Districts," is a walled town of, perhaps, 20,000 inhabitants, the most mutinous and troublesome in all Persia. It is the stronghold of the Bábis, or followers of Sáiyid Ali Muhammad Báb, the Joe Smith of Irán. An account of a conspiracy of this sect, and an attempt by them on the life of the present Shah, which took place in August, 1852, is given in that charming book, "Life and Manners in Persia," by Lady Sheil. Zanjánah was for a time in rebellion against the Shah, and was not reduced without difficulty. I had soon a specimen of the humour of the inhabitants. The *Chappar-Khánah* was dirty, hot, and full of fleas, and the station-master, one Muhammad Beg, was so inattentive to our wants, that Rahím declared he would burn not only his father, but his remotest ancestors. A grand row ensued, and presently Muhammad Beg rushed into the upper room, where I was, with his eyes gleaming and his face distorted with rage. "What dirt have I eaten," he shouted, "that I, the White-beard of ten post-stations should be insulted, struck, and taken by the waist, by your servant! My honour is dearer to me than all the money in the world, and it has been taken from

me. I demand justice—justice I will have!" I replied, "We are travellers, we want but little; but if that little is not given, servants will be angry. People just off a journey are naturally irritable, while station-masters, and others, who have not to leave their homes, ought to be more calm. You and Rahím are both disciples of Islám; are you not both followers of the Prophet who said, 'Blessed are they who restrain their wrath?' It is a pity you should not agree. There is no harm done—be friends." Having said this in the sweetest tone I could command, the infuriated Beg was somewhat pacified. Seeing my advantage, I began to talk about the town, and to ask questions about the Bábis, so that in the end he forgot his wrath; and declared it was wonderful that such a violent servant should have such a mild master. "For your sake," said he, "I forgive all."

As for Rahím, he was not so easily soothed. He wanted me to complain of Muhammad Beg to the authorities at Tehran, and declared he was a notorious *mufsid* (refractory person), and had been punished repeatedly for his insolence. I said that might be true, but that I did not wish to begin my career with

making complaints; that I had observed that he (Rahím) was too handy with his stick; that such conduct would not suit me, and that I must request he would not burn the most disagreeable individual's father, but leave him to be dealt with by higher authority. This admonition was evidently not very acceptable to Rahím, and he showed his ill-temper by criticizing the horse that was brought out for me, at 2 P.M., from Muhammad Beg's stables. "It has been down," said he; "any one can see that by its broken knees. I have asked for another; but the ostler says Muhammad Beg has ordered this, and no other shall be given to you." As I suspected Rahím was trying to incense me against the station-master for his own ends, I quietly mounted, and found that the horse, though rather slow, was the easiest paced animal I had had, and I got into Sultániyah, six farsakhs, or twenty-two miles, at sunset, very little tired with the day's ride of sixty miles.

Sultániyah was once a great city, but is now a village scattered among ruins. Four hundred families inhabit the place, which is principally remarkable for a once fine mosque, built by Iljaetu

Khan, a descendant of Jangíz, in 1300 A.D., and restored by Sultan Muhammad Mirza, surnamed Khudábanda, who began his reign in 1577. This mosque is about 150 feet high, and looks well at a distance, though the loss of the coloured tiles which once adorned its dome deprives it of beauty on a near approach. About a mile from it is a summer palace of the Shah, where he resides when he comes to review his troops in the great plain of Sultániyah, a plain so ample that Napoleon's Grand Army, with which he invaded Russia, might have manœuvred in it with ease. It is a famous place for a gallop, and foxes, hares, and deer are to be found; but the ground is rendered dangerous for horses by the innumerable holes of the jerboa.

On reaching the station, I was disgusted at finding I was to be located in a dirty, stifling little room, actually opening into the stable, so that the horses might have switched the flies away from me, had they been so minded. The station-master, however, and his men were so civil, that it was impossible to be dissatisfied. They brought me a plate full of the most delicious pomegranates, and I devoured several

with impunity. The station-master said the villagers were taxed highly, but they were content, though their crops had failed. When this occurs, the landlord, or the Government, makes *kifáf* (a reduction) in the tax, according to the losses of the peasants.

I rose at 3 A.M. after a sleepless night, and was in the saddle at 6.30. The air was delicious, and tolerably thick ice had formed on the pools. But after an hour or two the sun became very disagreeable, and I was quite tired of it by the time I reached Hindaj, five farsakhs, or eighteen miles, where I arrived at 11.30. The station at that place was clean, but unfinished, and the wind blew through the upper room much too violently to be pleasant. I felt so ill and weary that I would gladly have made a halt, but there was nothing for it but to go on. So at 2 P.M. I was again in the saddle, and after passing several fine villages reached the pretty town of Kirwah, five farsakhs, at 5.30 P.M. Just as I entered the place a fine bustard flew over my head quite within shot. The station here was the most comfortable I had yet been at, and the sound of a waterfall in the river hard by was most soothing. A blazing fire was lighted in the

upper room, and the station-master—a Kurd, and compatriot of Rahím—was so attentive, that I could not forbear from smiling. At Sultániyah there was nothing but *gawan*, a sort of dry grass, to burn, but here fine logs were produced. Both at Kirwah and at Sultániyah there is good shooting; at the latter place even tigers, in a jungle about twelve miles off in the hills to the north.

I rose on Sunday, the 21st of October, at 3.30 A.M., and mounted an hour afterwards. It was so dark, that all I could do was to follow Rahím's horse at a snail's pace. As soon as it dawned we set off at a gallop, but Rahím soon lost his way, and it was some time before we regained the track. The road was excellent, but hilly. We passed a great number of women, walking along in groups of twenty, apparently Iliyat, and some of them very handsome. They did not cover their faces. We reached the village of Siyah Dhun, eighteen miles, at 7.30 A.M., and having changed horses, left it in half an hour for Kazvin, eighteen miles further. The road was as level as the palm of one's hand, and our horses were excellent. About three miles from Kazvin we overtook a servant

of Bahrám Mirza, carrying despatches to Tehran, with a *shágird chappar* "*ostler*," it being the rule that every person or party hiring post-horses must be accompanied to the next station by an ostler to bring the horses back. On being joined by the courier we set off at full gallop, and kept it up to the city, where we arrived at 10.30 A.M. The last two miles the road was heavy, being deep sand.

Kazvin was built by Shapur Zul Aktáf, in 154 A.D. It has been under many princes the capital of Persia. It is situated in a fine plain, well supplied with water, at the opening of the Pass into the Province of Ghilan, on the Caspian. In a commercial point of view, therefore, nothing can be better than its site. Owing to political changes, however, it has gone much to decay, and there are probably now not 30,000 inhabitants. On this occasion I was unable to see the sights of the city. The post-house was dirty, but with a little care it might be made very comfortable. I had several applicants for medicine, and one man in particular begged hard that I would cure his wife, which he seemed to think I could do without seeing her.

At 2.30 P.M. I started again for Adl-ábád, "Abode of Justice," three and a half farsakhs (about twelve miles) off, which I reached in three hours. The station-master there informed me that the next stage was not very safe, and that my cook must not go on ahead unless he wished to be robbed. I therefore determined to halt, though the post-house was both small and dirty. It commanded, however, a fine view, and there was a nice grove of trees close by. The people in a caravan encamped under my window fired several times with ball during the night.

The road had now descended much from the elevation of Sultániyah, and the difference of climate was perceptible. I left Adl-ábád at 6.30 A.M. on the 22nd of October, and reached Safar Khwájah, three and a half farsakhs, twelve miles, at 10 A.M. On the right, and about four miles from Adl-ábád, I passed a large ruined village, or town, with the remains of fortifications. These ruins are called *Kharábát*, which is also the name of a tavern and of *lupanaria*, and is a word of frequent occurrence in the pages of the wine-loving Hafiz. "Is there any connection," thought I, "in the meanings?

and was the forbidden juice sold at ruined villages, so as to escape the Muhtesib's eye? This is possible, but it is more likely that *Kharábát* got the meaning of 'tavern' from the word *Kharib*, 'a thief,' as the resort of such characters."

Safar Khwajáh is a small village, so poor that the post-master told me he could not afford to send his children to the Múllá to be taught, though the fee was only two tumans, or 19*s*., a year, and that the mosque, which had in part fallen down, could not be repaired for want of funds. He said that the crops had failed from drought, while the complaint at Tabríz was that they had been destroyed by rain in excess. I asked if he could recollect the Russian war of 1828. He replied in the affirmative, and said that the Russians never got farther than the Káflán Kúh, and then inquired if the Russian Government was good to the peasantry.

The fruit at this village was most delicious. I ate some pomegranates, the flavour of which was exquisite, also a water-melon, cold as ice, and melting in the mouth. The apples, too, were not bad, and the grapes, I was told, were excellent." "With such

fruit as this," said I, to the old station-master, "you ought to consider yourself well off. Your gardens are like those of Paradise." "We have our drawbacks," he said; "for, not to speak of the taxes, we are pestered with *múziyát*, 'venomous creatures,' such as scorpions and tarantulas. I had like," he continued, "to have been stung by a black scorpion the other night when I was sleeping outside the house on account of the heat. I just saw it in time; it was coming with the intention of stinging me, but it was fated that it should die itself, so I saw it and killed it. Since that I have not dared to sleep out of the house."

"What do the tarantulas eat?" I asked. "And are they very venomous?"

"They eat dirt," said he, "and as for their venom, if they bite a man, and it be God's will, he will die of it."

"Well," I said, "if they eat nothing but dirt, they live cheap, and, at all events, cost nobody anything."

"By your head," said he, "they eat nothing but dirt, for they live where there is nothing else to be

got, and they would, if they could, make us eat dirt too, for when we go into the fields to get in our crops they try to bite us."

He said that all the families in the village were Turks, and that this part of Persia had formerly belonged to Turkey.

I started again at 1.30 P.M., and rode to Sangarábád, six farsakhs, twenty-two miles, arriving at 6 P.M. It blew quite a hurricane, and the dust was blinding. All along the road were numerous villages, and I passed many peasants. On inquiring my way of these, few could tell me the direction of Sangarábád, and one man said he had never been there, and did not know where it was, though it was only a few miles off. On reaching the post-house, I found the upper room had no door, and four open windows, so I slept below in a stifling den, as black as pitch from the smoke of years.

I left Sangarábád at 7 A.M. on the 23rd of October, on a small animal of a pony, regarding which I most unjustly uttered some contemptuous remarks to the station-master. To my surprise, it carried me better than almost any horse I had had, being fleet, willing,

and easy in its paces. The road was pretty good for the first twelve miles to Kirich, and we got over it in an hour and a half, passing at one farsakh a fine village, and at two farsakhs a grove with the tomb of an Imámzádah. Kirich was the favourite resort of Fath Ali Shah, grandfather of the present king of Persia, and he built there a fine palace, which he called Sulaimániyah, from his youngest and favourite son Sulaimán.*

I reached Miyánjúb, "between the streams," at 11 A.M., and, after halting at the miserable, dirty station there three hours, rode on to Tehran, five farsakhs, where I arrived at 6 P.M.

There is nothing very impressive in the appearance of Tehran. A city of 100,000 inhabitants, living in mud houses, and packed within a mud wall, twenty feet high, and four miles in circumference, cannot be a very striking object. Neither are the environs very attractive. A wide, stony plain, with mud-built villages here and there, and without lake, or stream, or forest, but studded with long

* This place will be described hereafter.

lines of circular pits, the shafts to the great subterraneous watercourses, on which in this region the life of animal and herb is altogther dependent, cannot of itself be very captivating. The one feature of the landscape that rivets attention, is the gigantic range of the Elburz mountains, ten thousand feet high, which runs like a wall of the Titans to the north-east of the city, and terminates in the stupendous peak of Demavend. The vast height of Demavend, 22,000 feet, is increased by a singular *tiara* of clouds, shaped like the triple top of a Buddist temple, which almost always crowns its summit, and links, as it were, earth to heaven. Another, but far lower range of mountains, commencing about four miles to the south-east of Tehran, runs up and seems to join that of the Elburz. At the southern extremity of this range are the ruins of the once celebrated city of Rhé, or Rhages, to the fall of which Tehran no doubt owes its rise. Close to these ruins is the sacred shrine and village of Shah Abdul Azím, whose gilded domes shine out from a green cluster of trees. This village, and the Kasr i Kájárs, or "castle of the Kájárs," built at the extremity of

a low ridge, running from the foot of the Elburz, to the north of Tehran, are the only picturesque objects in the plain.

I rode into Tehran by the New Gate, the most southern of the six gates of the city. The others are the Shah Abdul Azím, and the Doláb to the east, leading to the two villages so named; the Shimírán and the Doulat, or Palace Gate, to the north; and the Kazvin Gate to the west. Pushing through crowds of people, dogs and donkeys, in the darkness visible of covered bazars, and escaping with difficulty from the portentous swing of lines of loaded camels, and from the heels of vicious mules, I found myself in a tolerably clean spot, with the entrance to the Mission Garden on the one side, and that to the British Residency on the other. On getting off my horse, I learned that all the members of the Mission were at the country seat at Gulhek, except Dr. Dickson, who had come in for an hour or two to visit some fair patients. I found him in a house, which, properly speaking, is part and parcel of the Mission premises, but which was built, and partly occupied by himself, while some rooms in it are leased by him

to Government, as a lodging for the attachés. Here I obtained shelter for the night, and having luckily brought with me my own cook and camp-bed, I was enabled to make myself tolerably comfortable. Dr. Dickson having indicated my room, returned to Gulhek.

Thus the first discovery I made on my arrival at Tehran was that the Mission were living, as we are told is the duty of Christians, with their loins girded ready to depart at a moment's notice. No one had anything superfluous; as for a room ready to welcome a friend, from the Minister downwards no one could boast of such a luxury. A bed, a table, a few chairs, half-a-dozen books, a Persian carpet, and the inevitable Kalyán, or Persian pipe—such are the Penates of the English diplomate in Persia. The Frenchman and the Russian are better supplied. The first attention, however, I received came from an English officer in the Shah's service—from Colonel Dolmage, who invited me to breakfast, and begged me to send to his house for anything I might require.

CHAPTER IX.

The Tehran Mission—Kasr i Kajar—Gulhek.

I HAD intended to proceed to Gulhek on the 21st of October, the day after my arrival, report myself, and ask for orders, but in the morning Mr. Watson, a young gentleman attached to the Mission, rode down, and said I was to remain where I was, as Mr. Alison intended to be at Tehran in the course of the day, and would see me there. I employed myself, therefore, in examining the Mission premises, and in inspecting that part of the buildings I was to occupy. The whole ground on which the Tehran Mission is located belonged in the time of Fath Ali Shah, about half a century ago, to the Zambúrakchi Báshí, or commandant of the Shah's camel, literally, "Hornet" battery. This nobleman was a

great favourite with the Shah, and his Majesty gave him a proof of the confidence he placed in his loyalty, by asking for his house and grounds, which the royal favour at once transferred to the British Mission. The "Grand Hornet" having thus surrendered his honey, proceeded to hive about a quarter of a mile off, and had just made himself comfortable, when his quarters were wanted for the Russian embassy. Warned by a double experience of the danger of too much *luxe*, the chief of the hornets deposited himself for the third time in an abode too small for any diplomatic butterfly, and there he remained at peace, and dying left to his son—a fine gentlemanly young fellow, a good sportsman, and not one to harbour grudges—the satisfaction of seeing any day from his windows the grounds which belonged to his family, and which have passed into the hands of the stranger, who sometimes graciously allows him to take a walk in what should have been his own garden.

On the ground thus acquired, the British Government built, in the time of Sir Gore Ouseley, a good solid brick house, with a great wing or tail of mud,

the bricks for the envoy, and the mud for his tail, that is, the secretary and attachés.

I commenced my survey at the street portal, a mud and brick façade, some fifteen feet high, with a curve in the centre, where is the door, and opposite it a sort of cage, in which sleep the guard. One of them, who was on duty, but just when I approached was squatting on the ground smoking a hubble-bubble, started up, seized his musket, and presented arms, whereat I put a finger to my cap, and passed to the right, as I might have done to the left of the cage, into an oblong garden, surrounded by the perpetual fifteen feet wall. The sentry squatted down again and retook his pipe, after which he would probably lie on his back with his heels up, and then stroll out to look at a man with a dancing monkey, or talk to the lynx-eyed Saráidár, or "palace-keeper," who has a room contiguous to the cage.

I was now on a paved walk, with square beds on either side, and a circular one at the end. All these are full of beautiful trees, cypresses in particular. On the left of the portal is the doctor's dwelling, and beyond it, nearer the Mission-house, to

which I was going, the *Fil Khánah*, or "Elephant's house," so called from some mythic animal of the ante-Ouseley period, and now a square enclosure, where the horses of the Mission are exercised.

Continuing my progress, I passed on the left the house of General Buhler, of the Shah's service, and beyond that a small private house rented by Mr. Alison, for his valet. To this succeeded the Minister's stables, the property of Government, and the bath-house, where a tall greasy gnome stews those who like it, once a week, and helps their dying whiskers to revive.

On the right of the garden I saw a small room, whence issued the monotonous note of the tom-tom. That is the Zor-khánah, or gymnastic room, where the muscular Islam of the quarter is always busy with clubs and steel bows, developing its thews and sinews. Adjoining this is the Ghulám-Khánah, or "courier's yard," where the twelve stalwart messengers of the Mission keep their horses and their pipes. Beyond this again is the treasurer's room; and the rooms for the Minister's servants come next.

At the front of the mission-house I came to a broad flight of steps, leading to a portico paved with coloured tiles, and supported by pillars, about forty feet in length, and fifteen feet in breadth and height. On either side of this is a small room. That on the left was for long the chancellerie of the Mission. Since Mr. Alison's reign it is empty. Behind it is the dining-room, where the members of the Mission dine together. A door opens from the *salle-à-manger* into the billiard-room, and this again opens into the drawing-room, which occupies on the right nearly the position that the *salle-à-manger* does on the left, and is better entered from the bay-windowed room on the right of the portico, which serves as a smaller dining-room when guests are not invited, or the cold renders space undesirable. *Reste à décrire* the narrow room in front of the portico, where hangs the portrait of Fath Ali Shah, with gems of price, and priceless beard.

The rooms described are public, furnished by Government, and, by rights, accessible to all the members of the Mission. The Minister's own rooms are well placed for privacy. Pass through the bay-

windowed room on the right of the portico, and ascend a stair which leads to three good rooms, a bedroom, and a summer and a winter sitting-room. Beyond these a covered staircase descends into a quadrangle, where an admirable suite of apartments might be formed, out of what are now neglected store-rooms, *asyla* for the scorpion and the tarantula. Through this quadrangle a passage leads to the street.

Having paid my visit to the brick portion of the residency, and done homage to the flag that floats on the terraced roof, where, lest we spy out the chaste beauties of adjoining mansions, Persian jealousy will not trust us to mount, I proceeded to view the mud *annexe*, where I was to take up my lodging. Between a high wall which runs from the bath-house and the outer wall of the brick residency, is a narrow passage, which leads into a quadrangular garden behind the billiard-room. The wall to the left, as one enters this garden, is a *claustrum*, from beyond which come the voices of many women, the laughter of girls, and the cries of children, for it is the enclosure of the harem of a merchant, who

is rich in wives. Often their veiled figures are seen upon the terrace which overlooks the garden. They are watching the infidel Faringis at their meals, half in pity, half with loathing, as they think of the swine's flesh and other unclean meats which compose the repast. The opposite, or north-eastern side of the garden is closed by a long building of mud, which joins the Minister's rooms, and so forms a part of the residency. The portion of this mud building nearest the Minister's rooms was once inhabited by the fourth attaché, but has long been deserted, and

> "
> The spider weaves his web in the hall of Afrasiab.

The next piece of mud is called the secretary's house, though far from being emphatically "his," or, according to the Englishman's proverb, "his castle." In the first room where I entered was piled in one unsightly and perishing mass the books of the Mission, bearing the names of half a century of donors, from Malcolm, Harford Jones, Ouseley, and Hajji Baba, down to Doria and Rawlinson. In another room were heaped astronomical and scientific

instruments, a photographic apparatus on the grandest scale, which filled ten boxes, and various *impedimenta* belonging to Mr. Alison. The closet in the bedroom was sealed up and padlocked, and the only spot wholly at my disposal seemed to be the verandah, whence there was a glorious view of the Elburz mountains, closed by the giant cone of Demavend. There was, however, a small quadrangular garden beyond the verandah, closed on the left by the apartments assigned to the third attaché, on the right by a wing of the building occupied by the Minister, and in front by a row of servants' rooms looking into a street, beyond which again were the stables assigned to me and the second attaché.

After I had satisfied myself of the comfort or discomfort awaiting me, I retraced my steps to the doctor's house, crossed the street and went into the Mission garden, which was then a jungle of pomegranate trees, with two diameters of tall cypresses, of the average height of fifty feet. Be it remarked *en passant*, that these cypresses were the winter-quarters of all the flies of the neighbourhood. I discovered this one cold day in January, when observ-

ing a fly, wakened by a sunbeam, protrude his head from beneath the bark of a cypress, I went up to the tree, and, on examination, found that every bark-wrinkle was literally lined with flies in a torpid state. I then broke off a piece of the bark, and under it were innumerable larvæ of various kinds of insects. In summer the trees were even more crowded with insect life; for then, besides flies of every grade, from a huge kind, shaped like the common one, but of a lighter colour, and as large as a bee, down to the sand-fly, every branch was covered with legions of ants, who came to prey on some weaker insects, and themselves formed the food of innumerable small birds, while these again were slaughtered in the day by hawks, and at night by owls, that all dwelt in the same leafy fastnesses.

On entering the Mission garden, to the left is a long building in which the public tents are kept, a sweet abode for scorpions and tarantulas. I saw one of the largest scorpions I ever beheld in one of these tents, a fact in natural history which greatly damped my zeal for inspecting the premises for the future.

Beyond the tent magazine are the chancellerie, the library and the consulate, just erected, the latter on a piece of ground which has the curious property of subsiding every now and then, and engulphing the wall resting on it. Once, when inspecting this building with the palace keeper, and hastening across the quadrangle with him, my eyes fixed on something which required improvement, a miserable cry, seemingly from the ground, arrested my steps, and, turning my head, I saw my companion sunk up to his beard below the pavement, with an expression of horror and astonishment on his countenance, which was really quite ludicrous. On pulling him out, which I could hardly do for laughing, I found that there was quite a gulf under his feet—a gulf that, as he certainly was not the most precious article belonging to the Mission, would hardly have closed had he descended into it.

Under the shelter of the consulate wall, and within the garden, is the gardener's house, where dwell in safety a colony of Pársis, or fire-worshippers. These people fare in Persia as the Jews fared in England in the reign of John. Has some Isaac of the tribe a fair wife or daughter? there are cruel

De bois Guilberts enough in Persia to drag her or lure her from her home; witnesses in plenty to swear they heard her repeat the Kalamah, or creed of Islám. She must become a follower of the Prophet, and minister to the pleasures of her tyrant as long as beauty lasts, then be spurned forth to live upon the charity of her tribe, happy if she involve not her family in her own fate. The old gardener of the Mission has some such tale to tell. He has found rest now under the British flag, and at his hut, on the fasti of the sect, his persecuted brethren safely assemble to mutter the prayers of an effete and harmless superstition. There, too, less innocent folk assemble to purchase the forbidden juice of the grape, which these Guebres, somewhat to the scandal of the Mission, are in the habit of selling.

In the corner of the garden, beyond the wall of the consulate, is the tomb of a child of one of our earliest ambassadors, and with it ends the north side of the garden. On the east are the houses of two old Muhammadan ladies, who keep a school, and of a mullá or priest, and, oddly enough, next door to him, of a lútí or mountebank, who keeps bears or monkeys.

As a Persian said, it is highly improper that a priest and a rogue should be next-door neighbours, so, to save the proprieties, let the priest convert the lútí, or the lútí the priest, it does not matter which.

The south wall of the garden abuts close on the rampart of the city, and a sally-port for the Mission into the plain beyond would be an inestimable benefit to the members, so that they might pass at once to their horses or carriages outside the town without the necessity of wading through muddy streets, jostled by a mob of filthy animals and filthier men.

On the west of the garden is the house of the Kadkhudá, or alderman of the quarter. The large bath-house at the end of the building is open to all comers, when not required for the family of the Kadkhudá, and this fact is made known by the dismal sound of a horn, similar to those used of yore by Saxon swineherds. Swarms of muffled figures then pass and repass on the terrace, and ever and anon an unveiled face looks over into the Faringi's garden, and a girlish titter, or, may be, a word or two of not the most complimentary nature, is addressed to the walkers in the garden.

The house of the first attaché succeeds to the Kadkhudá's, and the circuit is completed by that of the Zamburakchi Bashi, to whose father the whole property belonged.

After making myself *au fait* with the localities, I waited on Mr. Alison, who was opening the mail bags. He asked me some questions about Herat, and said that, as the Mission would soon return from Gulhek to the town, I might please myself about joining him or remaining at Tehran.

The next day, the 25th of October, I rode up to Gulhek. I mounted about half-past 6 A.M., so as to escape the hot sun, and, turning to the left from the Mission, became in the first place aware that the streets have no names, though the covered bázárs have. In one of these bázárs, and by far the finest, that of Taki Khan, the Amír Nizam, I in a few minutes found myself. This bázár cost 30,000*l.*, and was finished in 1267, A.H., equal to 1850-51 A.D., the year the unfortunate founder was put to death by the Sháh's order. It is of brick, with shops on each side of a covered way, about 14 feet broad and 30 feet high, this way having several branches or streets. As

loaded camels, mules, donkeys, and horses are continually passing, besides crowds of people of both sexes, engaged in buying and selling, or promenading for pleasure, the scene is an animated one. Immense stores of English chintzes, of cloth, shawls and silks, of caps, slippers, and shoes, of drugs and pipes, are displayed in the shops. Long files of servants, sometimes as many as a hundred together, ever and anon break through the crowd, forcing a passage for some nobleman or minister, and high above the hum of the multitude comes the cry of the darvesh for alms, or the chant of the wandering Saiyid in honour of Ali, Husain, or Hasan.

Emerging from this bázár I found myself in an open space called the Sabzi Bázár, with the Gate of the Ark or Citadel before me. In this space criminals used to be executed, according to the approved Persian modes, pictures of which *in terrorem* have been painted in various places on the walls of the bázárs, such as decapitation, impaling, ripping up, suspension on hooks, and other ingenuities. I now came upon a rough, slippery stone pavement, peculiarly adapted for breaking the knees of a horse and

the nose of his rider. Passing over a moat by a solid bridge of masonry, I entered the ark, and then a short covered way, which led into a *maidán*, or open space of perhaps ten acres in front of the Shah's Palace. In the centre of this space I observed a platform with three huge guns of brass upon it, trophies from Hindustan. Here artillerymen were keeping guard, and a number of infantry soldiers were lounging about. Some months afterwards I saw one-half of that maidán nearly filled with brass field-pieces (iron guns the Persians have not, for they cannot cast them) to the number of several hundred. A French officer remarking these guns, inquired of a Persian of some rank how many cannon his government had. "You will find that out," was the answer, "when you are at war with us." The most conspicuous object in this maidán is the tower, from which the author of Hajji Baba casts the unfortunate Zainab. It overlooks the Shah's harem, and is about seventy feet high.

Issuing from the maidán, I passed along a street some twenty-five feet broad, paved with stone, and with oil-lamps at intervals. On either side of this

street are Government buildings, on the left the new Arsenal and the Shah's stables, on the right the Foreign Office and the Palace. At the end of this street, on turning to the right, I passed the Russian mission occupied after the massacre of Grüboedoff and all his suite, which took place in the Zamburakchi Bashi's house near the English Mission. The Russians then migrated to the Ark, where they might be more under the protection of the Shah. I now turned again to the left, and in a few minutes passed out of the city by the Daulat Gate. Opposite me I observed a small mosque, and, on inquiring its name, was told it had been erected over the head of Muhammad Amin, the Khan of Khaiva, who was slain in action by the Persians and whose head was brought as an offering to the Shah from Khurásán.

I now passed for a hundred yards or so along the city-ditch, which is about forty feet broad and from twenty to thirty deep, and without any fence or parapet, so that accidents sometimes happen, and on one occasion a ghulam of the Mission was carried down into it headlong by a runaway horse, but escaped with but small injury.

The suburbs beyond the city wall are nowhere very extensive. I soon got into an open plain, stony and quite barren, and a canter across it northwards, of some two miles and a half, brought me to the Kasr-i-Kájar, the Shah's Windsor Castle. It is picturesque at a distance, but a near approach dispels the charm. The garden of, perhaps, twenty acres is not well kept, and the best thing it can boast of, is the woodcocks, which are occasionally found in it in winter. In the centre is a pretty arched building, something in the Moorish style, with a fountain. Walking forward, with one's face from the city and towards the castle, one comes to a small tank, about 100 feet square and four feet deep, of very clear water, which is brought by a subterraneous canal from the mountains. This is an excellent place for skating, and has been the scene of some curious immersions. Beyond the tank some steps lead up to a pavilion in which are pictures of several princes and the renowned English Adonis, Mr. Strachey, called by the Persians, Istarji, to whom Fath Ali Shah addressed an ode, so celebrated in the East, that the instant Dost Muham-

med was introduced to a Mr. Strachey, he began to repeat it.

Istarji is in the court-dress of the last century, with sword and knee-breeches, and is really very good-looking. The windows of the pavilion are of coloured glass, the designs small but tasteful. Advancing in the same direction, one comes to several terraces ascended by brick steps, the last of which is from 20 to 30 feet high. On the topmost terrace are some fine trees. You are now at the door of the castle. It is a square building with a very lofty upper room in front overlooking the gardens, and commanding a view of a plain some forty miles in extent to the south. On entering the square you see two vast oblong beds for flowers, but in which only trees now grow. All round the square is a wooden eave, once prettily painted but now defaced. In the room below the upper chamber are portraits of Nadir Shah, and his *pahlaváns* or heroes, also of Fath Ali Shah and his sons, and of the ubiquitous Istarji.

On passing out from the Kasr to regain the road to Gulhek, I crossed the spot where Prince Muham-

mad Yusif, son of Malik Kasim, and grandson of Háji Firúzúdin Mirza, brother of Shah Shuja, was miserably put to death in 1857. The family of Saiyid Muhammad, son of the notorious Yár Muhammad of Herat, had petitioned the Shah to give Prince Yusif up to them, as by his orders Saiyid Muhammad had been strangled. The Shah acceded to their request, and went out on a hunting expedition. The prince was then hacked to pieces at the gate of the Kasr-i-Kájár, the two sons of Saiyid Muhammad, boys of thirteen and fourteen, striking the first blows.

From this spot of sad memories to the village of Gulhek is about a mile and a half. After a mile, I came to an avenue of stunted trees, at the end of which is the Dáúdíyah, a villa, now royal property, but built by the late Sadr Azim, Mirza Agha. In it are a few pictures. The garden is pretty, and woodcocks and hares are to be found there in winter. Beyond is a small stream, with a bridge, the passage of which is much more difficult and dangerous, such is its ruinous state, than that of the stream itself. I now found myself in a *maidán*, entirely

covered with stones of all sizes, from a rock to a pebble, with the village of Gulhek before me on my left, and that of Zargandah, where the Russian Mission reside in summer, on my right, both about half a mile off. After passing through the centre of Gulhek, a village of about 100 houses, I turned to the left up a lane, with gardens on each side. On the left was a large garden, now the property of Ismail Khan, paymaster of the forces, and beyond it the garden rented by the Mission., I passed into this under a mud building, which I found to be the chancellerie. Close to it a large tent was pitched, in which breakfast was laid for the Mission, and beyond this was a small mud house, in which Mr. Alison was lodged. I found him wearing the dress of a Turkish schoolmaster, which is pleasant for coolness, but not very becoming. Talking of a diplomatic quarrel, he said, "This is only another instance of the almost universal rule of secretaries quarrelling with their chiefs." I said, "Well, I hope we shall be an exception to that rule."

He laughed heartily, and said,—"I never quarrel with my secretaries."

After breakfast, I took a survey of the place. The garden rented by the Mission seemed to contain about three acres. There were a good number of fruit-trees in it, pomegranates, apple, cherry, and peach trees, and some rows of tall poplars.* By the northern corner was a Yakhchál, a place for making ice. These are very common about Tehran, and are made as follows:—A pan is dug in the earth, say a hundred and fifty feet long, twenty broad, and eighteen inches deep. With the earth taken from this, a wall thirty feet high is erected, and behind are pits for storing the ice, which easily forms in the shallow pan, after water has been admitted to it from some watercourse. The ice is generally dirty, and very cheap.

Beyond the garden, and sloping up towards the Elburz, is an open space, bounded on the right by a deep ravine, and on the left by a row of trees, terminating in a huge silk cotton-tree, very conspicuous for a long way round. In this space the tents of the attachés, and of the Persian guard, some fifty men of one of the Shah's regiments, were pitched. The fertility, nay, the very existence, of

the village depends upon watercourses, the water, from some of which has been lately alienated to other places, and especially to the Dáúdíyah.

The whole locality abounds in tarantulas, or *phalanges*, spiders the size of a walnut, with two tremendous and very poisonous nippers protruding from the head. Such is the vigour of these odious insects, that when confined with scorpions, some of them have been known to kill and chaw up their amiable companions in a very few minutes. Deadly serpents and scorpions also exist at Gulhek, but in this respect Zargandah bears away the palm. Here scorpion-hunting by candle-light is quite a fashionable amusement.

At the time of my first visit to Gulhek, the position of the Mission there was very unsatisfactory. Muhammad Shah in 1835 had given over the seignorial rights to the English, and the Mission received some 10*l.* in virtue of this concession, and disbursed double the sum in subscriptions for fêtes to the villagers, as at the Táẓiyah, or mourning for the family of Ali. It was understood that no one could settle in the village without the permission of the English Minis-

ter, but it seemed to be entirely doubtful whether the Minister himself would be able to maintain his footing. The garden he rented had belonged to the Imám Jumah, or High Priest of Tehran, who left it in *vakf*, that is, for religious purposes, to the trusteeship of one Mullá Ali, a bigoted man, by no means partial to Faringis. The lease held by the Mission would expire in a year, and the Mulla would not revive it except on exorbitant terms, neither would he sell *vakf* land to an infidel, and had he been willing to do so, the Persian Government, jealous of land passing to foreigners, would not have permitted the sale. Some months after, Mr. Alison placed the matter entirely in my hands, and it was my good fortune, with the help of the chief Persian secretary, to obtain all the ground as a free gift to the Mission from the Shah.

I returned to my quarters in Tehran by a somewhat different route, entering by the Shimrán gate. Close to this gate are two royal villas. Of them the Nigáristán, or "picture gallery," was built by Fath Ali Shah. There is a large bath in it, where it is said that the king used to sit beside the water, while

his ladies came sliding down to him from an upper chamber on a long incline, in a state of nudity. The Shah caught them, one after another, and tossed the lovely armfuls into the reservoir. Mr. Binning * has mentioned this story, which, perhaps, after all may be only a story. Certain it is that, in the matter of wives, the old Shah was a perfect Solomon, and his descendants now amount to thousands. He was also very fond of gambling, but not much inclined to pay when the luck was against him. On one occasion, having lost a large sum to several of the princes, he threw himself down on the carpet, and held up his feet in the attitude of one receiving the stick, as much as to say, "Bastinado me, but you get no money."

In the Nigáristán are some paintings of the royal levées, in the time of Fath Ali Shah. On the right of the king are the foreign ambassadors, and among them Malcolm, and on the left the great officers of state. In an upper room in this villa, Muhammad Shah, father of the reigning monarch, caused his minister, the Kaim Makám, to be put

* *Two Years' Travel in Persia.*"

to death. All agree that Muhammad Shah was a pious man, and naturally of a kind nature, and it may be supposed, therefore, that his minister deserved his fate. It is said, however, that the principal cause of his punishment was his having neglected to pay certain sums to Hájí Mirza Aghassi, the Shah's favourite.

The next villa is the Nizámíyah, built by the late Sadr Azim, for his son the Nizamu'l Mulk, when he espoused the Shah's daughter. There are some pictures in this villa also, and a pretty tank of clear water adorns the garden.

I was now to set up an establishment, and enter on routine life at Tehran. I reserve my experiences for the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

L'Emménagement—Persian Servants—The Cuisine in Persia—Life in the Tehran Mission—First Visits—Rides about Tehran—The Race-course—The Waterfall—Shah Abdúl Azim—Rhages.

I COMMENCED the 26th of October with a sharp fit of fever and ague, but as soon as I could move from Dr. Dickson's house, I installed myself in the Secretary's quarters. Rahím had provided me with a complete set of servants, and I had now the honour of being introduced to them.

Denomination.	Wages per Month. Tumans.	£	s.
Názir, or Butler	6 =	3	0
Ashpaz, Cook	5 =	2	10
Pish Khidmat, Waiter at Table	3 =	1	10
„ „	3 =	1	10
Farrásh i Khalwat, Valet	4 =	2	0
Jilaudár, Head Groom	3 =	1	10
Mehta, Groom	2 =	1	0
Farrásh, Carpet Spreader	3 =	1	10
„ „	2½ =	1	5
Nine servants in all at	31½ =	15	15
Total per annum	378 =	189	0
Add two months' extra wages given at the Nauroz, or Vernal Equinox	63 =	31	10
Grand Total	441 =	220	10

I saw at a glance that one or two of these men were unnecessary, and told Rahím so. "The people of Persia," he said, "judge by what they see. A man's worth may be great, but if he goes forth alone, he will be lightly esteemed. These men are to surround the Sahib when he passes through the city. It is for the honour of the Sahib—the honour of the Sahib is very precious to me." There was some truth in these words of Rahím, though his chief object in making my establishment so large was, as in everything he did, to secure some pecuniary advantage for himself. Each of these men would pay him a per-centage on their wages, and be otherwise useful to him. Still in Persia there is no such recognized mark of rank as a numerous body of attendants, and no greater social nuisance than the necessity of such an *entourage*. On grand occasions, when persons of rank are invited, it is requisite to entertain their servants also, and subsequently, when I was appointed chargé d'affaires, I more than once provided dinner for upwards of a hundred servants, as well as for their masters. Add to this, that tea and pipes are in requisition from morning to night for every messenger that comes.

Persian servants nearly all drink, gamble, and indulge in the most shocking vices, and are continually robbing their masters in order to provide the means for gratifying their depraved tastes. Their character, however, depends very much on that of those they serve. I had a very good instance of this in my own household. When the day came for dismissing Rahím for his extravagance and effrontery, I charged him, among other things, with placing notorious scamps about me. "One of them," said I, "is Rizá, who is next to you in rank. Every one tells me he is a noted bad character." Rahím had not a word to say in reply; and I then sent for Rizá, told him that I had been informed of his character, and must send him away, as I was determined not to have about me "any persons who might bring disgrace on the Mission." "That is not just," cried Rizá, a fine, bold, handsome young fellow. "You have no right to punish me for what happened before I came to you; as long as I serve you faithfully, you ought not to complain; when I do anything wrong, turn me away, but keep me till then." "That is true," I replied, "and I will keep you, but, now

mind, the first time I detect you in anything wrong, you shall go." The result was that Rizá remained with me to the last, and proved himself a most devoted servant.

I must add, too, not in self-laudation, but in justice to the Persians, that, while I heard all the Europeans around me complain of being robbed, some of them of very large sums, I never, to my knowledge, lost the slightest thing. On the contrary, it was quite amusing to see the seriousness with which the *Sán*, or half-yearly inventory I took, was entered upon. "Alhamdu'lilláh! Praise be to God!" my head servant would exclaim, complacently stroking down his beard, "the spoons are all right."

After settling with my servants, the next thing was to inspect the cuisine, and learn something about the supplies procurable. Here my satisfaction was not extreme. In the first place, dinners in Persia are cooked on little trumpery charcoal fires made in hearths, raised sometimes several feet from the ground, and not above a foot deep, and ten inches broad and long. Coals are not used in kitchens, and to roast a large joint is almost impossible.

In the next place, the want of the most common articles, such as wire-netting, is a great obstacle in the cuisine. A proper safe cannot be made, and the risk of your dinner being carried off by cats, or spoiled by the heat or by insects, is so great that no insurance office would guarantee you against the risk. The consequence is that the meat is tough, or in a state still more disagreeable.

But, κάκιστον μεν ὕδωρ, the greatest obstacle of all to comfort and cleanliness, not only in the kitchen, but generally, is the condition of the water when it comes to be employed in the household. Fortunate it is that the use of the microscope and chemical analysis are unknown in Irán, or such things would be disclosed as would horrify every one. The fact is, the Persians have an unfortunate theory that nothing can pollute running water. Filthy globules, they think, are replaced by pure ones so rapidly, that it matters not what happens a yard above the spot where you are drinking. It was so difficult for me to realize this idea that my eyes dilated with astonishment when I first beheld the practical results of this theory. I have seen a man drinking from the same *hauz*, or

basin, and nearly at the same spot, where another was washing his beard, and a third was scrubbing the sort of salad bowl which so surprised Madelon when she first dined at the château of Jeffs. You have only to step out into the street for a moment at Tehran to remark a party of women washing the filthiest linen in the conduits which convey the drinking water into the neighbouring houses. Having seen that, take my advice, and look no further, or you will discover infinitely worse things a little way on. When it is considered that there are few or no wells, and that every stream, conduit, and tank is treated after this fashion, we cannot but echo the words of a German engineer, who, on my asking him about the telegraph, said, "Meiner Meinung nach, in Tehran die reine Wasserleitung ist viel mehr nothwendig als der Telegraph."

Short as my experience of Persia had been, I had some misgivings about the purity of the water to be employed in my household, and my fears were not lightened when I came to examine the *hauz* or reservoir. The water in it looked more like slime than *aqua fontis*, and the instant I approached

it, a lot of obese frogs, who were singing like the chorus in Aristophanes, went down with a splash and a gurgle which set a multitude of efts and other anomalous reptiles in motion in all directions. I ordered it to be immediately cleaned out, and so got rid of the impurities of years; but I never was able to prevent my servants from performing their religious ablutions at its edge, and washing in it every imaginable vase from a cup upwards and downwards.

The living in Persia might be excellent, but is not so for want of transport. The Caspian provinces teem with pheasants, snipes, woodcocks, hares, and wild-fowl, and could supply herrings, trout, salmon, sturgeon, isinglass for jellies, and caviare, to any amount. Game is plentiful everywhere in Persia, though hard to get at; but bustards, florican, pigeons, partridges, hares, and deer, could be had in abundance at Tehran. The mutton is good, and, with care, might be made excellent; and fowls and turkeys only want fattening and looking after. But beef is hardly procurable, though were there a means of rapid transmission from Resht,

that, too, might be had. I, for one, would never introduce the "unclean animal" to table in Persia or any Muhammadan country. I believe that in a hot climate the flesh of the hog is very unwholesome, and, moreover, I do not care for it, but if I did, I would abstain on the principle of not making my brother to offend. The prejudices of the people with whom one lives are never slighted with perfect impunity, and there is a story well known at the Tehran Mission, which would cure the most reckless of ham-eating propensities. Most of the European vegetables are grown with some success, but in very small quantities, at Tehran. The potato is in general miserably under-sized, which is owing to the idleness of the gardeners, who deposit the seed almost on the surface of the ground, rather than be at the trouble of scooping or "dibbling" a hole. Asparagus grows wild in Persia, but the indigenous plant is as inferior to the cultivated as a Hottentot is to a refined European.

The rice of Persia is bad. There are two sorts—the ambabú and the champa. The ambabú has a villanous smell, whence its name; and the champa

is not very wholesome. The greatest want of all is good bread. The Russians, indeed, import good flour and leaven from the Caspian, and have always some one who can bake. The English are not so fortunate, and, while I was in Persia, had for the most part to put up with the bread of the country, which resembles the Indian *chapáti*, thin, unleavened, and unpalatable. Yeast is not procurable in Tehran.

The making fermented liquors being an offence against the laws, the mode in which Persian wines are fabricated is the rudest possible. The Shíráz wine is the best, after which comes that of Hamadan, and then that of Ispahán and Khurásán, but no native wine is palatable or wholesome, in comparison with that of Europe. On the other hand, European wine is dear at Tehran, the expense of transport being quite half the original price. This consideration is even more telling with regard to beer, and that beverage was very seldom seen at the English Mission table.

European society at Tehran is necessarily very limited, and is rendered more disjointed than it need be by the unlucky circumstance that the European

missions are dotted about the town as far as possible from each other. Even this would be of comparatively small importance if carriages were available. But there are no means of locomotion in Tehran, except on foot or on horseback, and the streets are so filthy and so full of holes that a pilgrimage by night is a *corvée* not to be endured.

The missions, therefore, are thrown very much on themselves for amusement, and the members of each diplomatic body take their meals with their own chief, who supplies the table. This has always been customary, and is, besides, obligatory at the British Mission. It may be questioned, however, whether it is a satisfactory arrangement. Were, indeed, the diplomatic service now constituted as it was a century ago, it might be very proper and agreeable for all the members of a mission, constituting, in fact, but one family, and selected by the ambassador himself, to live together. But at present, men of the most opposite principles and feelings, and entire strangers to one another, are brought together under a chief to whom they have no tie or attachment but such as may be formed by

his own worth, or the fascination of his society. Should the head of the mission be a man whose private character is unworthy of respect, and whose manners are not inviting, that which is no more than a feeling of repugnance at first must by perpetual contact be aggravated into positive dislike. Add to this that it is surely better that a seat at the Minister's table should be regarded as a privilege rather than as a right. Comparisons as to the liberality, or the reverse, of succeeding heads of a mission will, of course, always be made, but the disposition to make these comparisons is greatly increased where custom and regulation have fixed a standard of entertainment.

Riding is almost the sole amusement at Tehran, and as there are foxes and hares it is easy to turn the "constitutional" canter into a gallop after game, greyhounds doing duty for harriers and foxhounds. *Nous autres Anglais* did achieve this, but as for the Russians they played at cards and walked, the French studied and talked, and the Turks moped and smoked. There was, indeed, one Frenchman, and only one, who loved *la chasse*, and he used to appear with a gigantic

horn, a harmless instrument, however, for it was never blown. The same gentleman once stalked a hoopoe, and having slain it with two barrels, sent off his servant at once to get the creature stuffed, as an eternal monument of his prowess. There are billiard-tables both at the English and the Russian Mission. The English Mission has also a library of more than three thousand volumes, which I had the pleasure of collecting from the holes and corners into which the books had been cast, and of arranging and cataloguing—a labour of love which occupied my leisure hours for a couple of months. Mr. Alison and Sir H. Rawlinson very generously contributed many valuable works to this library.

The usual routine was, the morning ride, breakfast at 10 A.M., office hours from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.; a second gallop before dinner, billiards or whist, and the Persian pipe at half-hour intervals. On Sundays the office was in general shut, and visits or a picnic breakfast took its place; but in other respects one day was like its fellow. I, however, read prayers at my own quarters on the day of rest, and one or two members of the Mission were always present.

A day or two after I had installed myself in my own quarters I received a number of visits from the English protégés and others. Among the first who came were the brothers Ghiyás Khan and Sultan Khan, Afghans of Persian descent, whose father was Vazír to Shah Shuja, and suffered imprisonment and loss of all his fortune for the British cause. A pension of 1,200*l.* a year was conferred by the Indian Government on this family, and Sultan Khan holds also the office of chief Persian secretary to the British Mission at Tehran, for which office he is well fitted, for he has the most intimate acquaintance with Afghan and Persian politics, is a handsome gentlemanly man, and possesses what in the eyes of the Iránís is the greatest of all qualifications, the art of the calligrapher.

After them came Ákhund Muhammad Sálih, the pensioned treasurer of the Mission, who is nearly a hundred years old. He told me he remembered Agha Muhammad Shah, the founder of the present dynasty of Persia. He is bowed, but his teeth are still good, and he takes a long walk round the city every morning. He drinks very little tea and no

coffee, but takes an opium-pill in the morning and a glass of wine at sunset. He was Persian teacher to Sir J. McNeil, Sir J. Shiel, Major Tod, Sir H. Rawlinson, and others. "Tod Sahib," said he, "was very *díndár* (pious), and he read the Anjíl, (Gospel) on Sundays." Here the old man smiled, and looked doubtfully at me, as if he thought I might imagine him to be exaggerating, or as if he felt it sounded incredible that a Christian should show any religious feeling at all. He spoke rather slightingly of the fair sex, and said he had had a wife for thirty years, but that he had divorced her, and not married again, "and," added he, "I now feel more comfortable."

On the 6th of November Mr. Alison took me to call on the Amínu 'd Daulah, Home Secretary, and on Mirza Saíd Khan, Secretary for Foreign Affairs. We mounted during a drizzling rain, which occasionally changed into a pouring shower, and went first to the Amínu 'd Daulah, whom I had met before in England, as Farrukh Khan. He received us in an upper room, the ceiling of which was covered with pictures of fair women, while the walls

were tastefully adorned with glass, with many facets and enamel.

The pipe plays an important part at Persian visits. Until it is brought you can converse on the long ride you took yesterday, on the superiority of Arab horses to Turkuman, or *vice versâ*, it mattering not a straw what your opinion may be, so that you say something. When the first pipe has been smoked you will enter on business, if you have any. The second pipe will arrive just when you are saying something which you do not wish to be known to the public, and you will consequently "shut up" with great speed; and the third pipe is your congé, and you will take yourself off. N.B.—Tea of the most undecided character, the leaf having long since had all the nonsense taken out of it by repeated boilings in economic Deutschland, and coffee will be brought in with exasperating frequency during the most secret parts of your colloquy, and the anxiety of the numerous servants who bring the cups to catch every word you are saying will be too marked to escape your notice.

Farrukh Khan spoke of the seasonable rain, and

of the possibility of its averting the famine which was then impending over Tehran. On the other hand, he informed us that the cholera had reached his native city, Káshán, and might be expected amongst us in the capital at an early day. He asked, also, many questions about the then recent ascent of Demavend by two members of the Mission. There was no business to transact, and nothing to detain us long, except the pleasure of hearing the Italian of the East spoken so musically as it was by this minister.

We then went to Mirza Saíd Khan, whose house is in a beautiful garden, whence there was a fine view of the magnificent snow-covered Elburz. He was very pleasant and chatty, and I thought his manners agreeable. He spoke much of his beautiful orange-trees, for which he said he had paid two thousand túmáns, in addition to the price of his house, each tree being valued separately. He said that there were some thousand oranges on the trees, and he had not allowed any to be gathered. He is a Sayid, and is very religious, and talked much of the Providence of God.

On the 7th, we went to a grand banquet given by the Sípáh Sálár, or Commander-in-Chief, in honour of the marriage of his son with the Shah's daughter. The Sípáh Sálár is the head of the senior branch of the royal tribe, and is enormously rich for Persia, having probably a fortune of a million sterling. I observed that the Persians did not drink wine at table. It is said, however, they make up for it in secret. The Shah's band of fifty-two performers played under the direction of a French officer. I sate next the Shah's brother-in-law, who was richly dressed. But the Sípáh Sálár himself blazed with gold, and he had an order round his neck, set in diamonds, that would have made Aladdin envious.

I had now completely got into the groove of Tehran life. My leisure hours, when office work was done, were employed in studying Russian and other languages. Then there was daily the inevitable ride. Mine was in general short and sharp. I rode past the house of the Muaiyiru 'l Mamálik, the richest man in Tehran, and high in favour with the Shah, to the Kazvín, or western gate of the city. I

then galloped up to the race-course, round it, and on a mile or two, and so back.

It would astonish a Newmarket jockey, that race-course, as it did me. The exact periphery is two miles all but 30 yards 16 inches. I measured it first with a chain, and made it 3,489 yards 1 foot 8 inches, and then with a pedometer, which was not in very good order, and the result was 3,052 yards, round a mud wall about 5 feet high. An outer wall of the same description is carried round the course at about 30 yards from the inner. The ground is in some places hard, in others shingly, but there is not an inch of turf or grass. I shall allow myself here to anticipate a little, and bring before my reader what occurred on the 10th of December, 1861, in order to exhaust the subject of the Tehran race-course and Persian races.

After several false starts, I awoke in good earnest at the right hour on the morning of that day, on which a horse from the Minister's stable, ridden by his groom, was to compete with the best horses of the Persian Jockey Club. Mr. Alison had asked me to be present, and at 20 minutes past 7 A.M. I had

breakfasted, and was galloping along to the stand, a low brick building, and on the left of the Grand Stand, where the Shah sits, with rooms for his harim on his right, and for the Persian princes and ministers on his left. There were to be five races, the first six times round the course, or nearly twelve miles, the second five times, the third four times, the fourth three times, and the fifth twice round the course. The rain began to fall as I approached the ground, and it rained incessantly for several hours. The clouds descending veiled the mountains, and occasionally, as they lifted, a mantle of snow appeared, covering the heights to within a thousand feet of the plain.

On reaching the course, I cantered round it, and observing a gap in the inner wall about half-way round, I stationed a man there, as malicious persons have said that a fresh horse is sometimes started from this spot towards the end of the race, if there appear to be any chance of the favourite losing. I then went to see the horses. One, a white Arab, had been successful more than once before. It did not strike me as having any remarkable points, and

its hind-legs were puffed. Another, a sorrel Turkuman, sixteen hands high, was cleaner in the limbs, but seemed deficient about the shoulder. The English jockey's horse, a black Turkuman about sixteen hands, looked to be in the best condition, but knowing from experience that he was a tremendous puller, with groggy legs, I did not much envy his rider. However, he said he was all right, and he looked quite confident.

I had scarce got on the flat roof of the stand when crowds of people began to arrive, and presently a regiment of the Shah's infantry marched up, and were posted so as to keep back the mob, whose ardour was likewise checked by the rain, which now descended pitilessly. After a number of grandees had passed, with numerous trains of attendants, a body of royal farrashes made their appearance, with long white wands, shouting furiously to all and singular to get out of the way. These men preceded the ladies of the Shah's harím, and their zeal seemed to border on the comical, for an unfortunate blind beggar having wandered across the line of beauty, a number of them rushed upon him, and handled

him about as mercilessly as if he had all the eyes of Argus and the indiscretion of Acteon. The bewildered mendicant at one time plunged frantically towards the sacred carriages, instead of flying from them, and then such a hubbub arose that I gave him up for lost; but at last he was cuffed and poked out of the way till he disappeared from my view.

The royal ladies were followed by a regiment of cavalry, under an Italian officer; and to these succeeded the camel battery, which announced by a salute that the Shah was not far off. Before him, however, arrived a number of young princes, quite children, on horseback, surrounded by female attendants, also on horseback. I could only surmise that these attendants were servants, for, as regards dress, the invariable blue mantle and white veil cloak all distinctions in Persia. The Shah now appeared on horseback, with a red umbrella held over him, and preceded by a body of *mustaufis*, officers of the finance department, dressed in red, and walking, it not being decorous to be mounted near the king on such an occasion. Meantime the crowd was by no means tranquil, but surged about, swore, cuffed one another,

and expostulated with a din quite equal to that of mobs in other countries.

The jockeys now peeled, and the Englishman (a man between twenty-five and thirty years old) was very conspicuous among the Persian jockeys, fair boys of twelve or fourteen. At 10 A.M. the start was made. There were eight or ten horses, and they all, except the Englishman's, jumped off nearly together, the white Arab and the sorrel leading, and H——, the Englishman, a length or two behind. As the horses came round, I was surprised to see H—— about one hundred yards in the rear, and holding hard. The second time round this distance was vastly increased, and the French officers called out to me, "Mais où est l'Anglais?" I replied, "Ne vous inquiétez pas de cela—l'Anglais connaît son affaire." Still I thought it odd that the horse evidently did not pull. The third round there was no longer any doubt what was the matter. H—— was flogging, and the horse did not respond in the very least—he was half a round behind. The fourth round the white Arab and another were nearly a round in advance of the miserable Anglais, who was fain to sneak out of the race, fol-

lowed by the laughter and jeers of the Persians. The race was done in twenty-six minutes twenty-nine seconds, and the winner did not seem distressed. As for me, I would gladly have gone away rather than listen to the chaffing which was administered to me most unsparingly. "The English do not understand horses," said one man; "if they want to race, let them get a Persian to train and ride for them." "Next year," said another, "the Shah will give your Minister a horse; if it please God, things will turn out better. Do not be vexed, the same man cannot do all things well. The English can ride in ships, though they are unfitted for horseback. The Persians are horsemen, but they do not understand ships."

In the middle of all this some of the royal farrashes came running up to the Grand Stand with bundles of long sticks, and the *falek* or board for elevating the feet of offenders when they are to be beaten. "The Shah has ordered two men to be bastinadoed," was the cry. I was almost wicked enough to rejoice at the Unknown's physical agony as a means of distracting people's attention and so

ending the mental tortures I was suffering from the jokes about the race. However, the bastinado did not come off. It turned out that the criminals were two eunuchs who had forgotten to bring the Shah's cloak, and the day was so cold that had I been a despot in similar circumstances I think I, too, should have sent for the sticks, and then have, as the Shah did, forgiven the culprits.

I remained to see the four other races. After each race the jockey came and made obeisance to the Shah, and the winner received a bag of coin, which he placed on his head. The boys were dressed very prettily in wide *shalwárs*, "trousers," with bright red, green, or yellow tunics. The time was as follows:—

	1st Race. Won by a white Arab.			2nd Race. Won by a bay Arab.			3rd Race. Won by a chestnut Turkuman.			4th Race. Won by a white Arab.			5th Race.		
	H.	M.	S.	H.	M.	S.	H.	M.	S.	H.	M.	S.	H.	M.	S.
Started at ..	9	55	20	10	30	53	11	1	56	11	33	45	11	56	10
1st round ..	9	59	30	10	35	3	11	6	10	11	37	50	12	0	30
2nd " ..	10	3	56	10	39	25	11	10	38	11	42	24	12	5	3
3rd " ..	10	8	18	10	44	22	11	15	14	11	47	14			
4th " ..	10	12	42	10	49	10	11	20	13						
5th " ..	10	17	17	10	53	44									
6th " ..	10	21	39												

Time of each round in minutes and seconds:—

	1st Race.	2nd Race.	3rd Race.	4th Race.	5th Race.
	M. S.	M. S.	M. S.	M. S	M. S.
1st round ..	4 10	4 10	4 14	4 5	6 20
2nd „ ..	4 26	4 22	4 28	4 34	4 33
3rd „ ..	4 22	4 57	4 36	4 50	
4th „ ..	4 24	4 48	4 59		
5th „ ..	4 35	4 34			
6th „ ..	4 22				
Total ..	26 29	22 51	18 17	13 29	10 53

Another pleasant ride in summer is to a waterfall in the Elburz mountains, about three miles above Gulhek. The road passes in a northerly direction, first close beside the encamping ground of the Turkish Mission, and after a mile through the large village of Tajríj, where at the tomb of Salíh, a nephew of the Imám Riza, is a *chinar*, or "plane-tree," the trunk of which is sixty feet in circumference. Beyond Tajríj the path begins to ascend and soon mounts to places where it is quite possible for a horse to slip over from an inconvenient height. On the occasion of my first visit my horse, being a fidgety creature, got both his hind legs off the path, and only recovered himself by a prodigious effort, sending over a shower of stones and earth, which descended where I was nearly going, some fifty feet sheer down,

and where the gentleman who was riding behind me said his imagination already pictured me.

The waterfall, or that part of it usually visited, is, perhaps, fifteen hundred feet above Tehrán, and the view is fine, but the cascade itself is the chief attraction, a band of clear water leaping about forty feet down into a picturesque glen with a little grove of wild cherry-trees. The cherry is the white heart, and is little inferior to the garden fruit. About the glen and all up the mountains are to be found insects of many varieties, so that there is a rich field for the collector. There is a small village near the waterfall, many of the inhabitants of which have never been to Tehran, while some of them, it is said, believe that the Elburz mountains, on the side of which they are located, are the end of the world, and that there is nothing but vacuity beyond.

To the west of Tajríj, about a mile off, are the ruins of a villa in which Muhammad Shah died on the 6th of September, 1848, and on the hill above is a curious rock called by the Europeans the mushroom-stone, weighing perhaps one hundred tons, and shaped

like the fungus from which it has its name, though the Persians call it the *Pîr Zan*, "old woman."

The ride to the village and sanctuary of Shah Abdúl Azím has at least the advantage of being along a good, level, stoneless road, where one may enjoy a canter of four miles without hurting a horse's legs. Nevertheless, my first and second riding adventure were on this road, the first being simply a roll with my horse in a muddy ditch. The second adventure had a more serious aspect. I was cantering along, when I met three horsemen and a man on foot. As I came up the footman pulled out a large knife and rushed at me. My horse was a violent one, and, taking fright at the attack, reared and sent the assailant staggering, and then went off at speed. As soon as I could stop him I rode back, and two mounted servants I had with me came galloping up. I then demanded of the horsemen an explanation. They said the man was mad, and they would take care he should not again attempt mischief, on which I told my men to mark the party, and finished my ride. Next day I learned that the men were Kurds, attendants on the Nawáb of Kurdistan, who

offered to punish the fellow who had tried to stab me, if I required it, which, of course, I accepted as a *brutum fulmen*, for which it was no doubt intended.

The sanctuary of Abdúl Azim has its name from Abúl Kásim, surnamed Abdúl Azim, a descendant in the sixth generation of the Imám Hasan, who was put to death and interred there. The mosque built over his remains has a gilt dome, and is frequented by multitudes of people from Tehran. It is *bast*, or a place of asylum for fugitive debtors and criminals. Properly speaking, no sanctuary should protect the fraudulent debtor, for the old abuses of this nature have been abolished by the Shah's edict; but he would be a bold man that would dare to take any supplicant from the sanctuary of Shah Abdúl Azim. So great are the crowds that visit Shah Abdúl Azim that a railroad from Tehran to the sanctuary would undoubtedly be a very remunerative public work, and it is one that has been several times proposed.

Bordering on Abdúl Azim is a tract, two miles and a half in length and two miles broad, covered

with the ruins of the ancient Rhé, or Rhages, which is said to have been built originally on the borders of the salt desert, beyond Viramin, and thirty miles to the south of these ruins. The migration of eastern cities is a well-known fact. They are destroyed, and the surviving inhabitants rebuild their habitations at a little distance. Thus Meshed is a resuscitation of the ancient Tús, the ruins of which are nine miles distant. Rhé is first mentioned in the Behistún inscriptions as being the place where the troops of Darius Hystaspes captured the rebel Median prince. Alexander the Great, in his pursuit of Darius, reached it on the eleventh day from Hamadan. It was the capital of Ashk, the founder of the dynasty of the Arsacidæ, in 255 B.C. In 638 A.D., Yezdijird fled there after his defeat by the Arabs. About 900 A.D., Ismaíl Samání conquered Rhé. In 967 A.D., Shemgur founded an independent dynasty at Rhé, which was the last conquest of Mahmúd of Ghazni, in 1027 A.D. Rhé was also one of the capitals of the Seljucides, and was taken and in great part destroyed by Tímúr Lang. The principal remains are portions of the

eastern ramparts, a wall running along the side of the mountain, which dominates the site of the city, and two round towers about 60 feet high with Kufik inscriptions round the top.

CHAPTER XI.

Gloomy winter of 1860—Fall of my Prime Minister—Tour in the District of Virámín—Preparations for a Journey to the Caspian Provinces—Riots at Tehran, and Death of the Kalántar—Departure for Resht—Kand—Sulaimániyah—Kurdán—Coal Mines near Hir.

My first winter at Tehran was indeed a sad one. The three weird sisters, Famine, Pestilence, and War, combined to desolate Persia. It was impossible to go out without being assailed by the importunities of crowds of famishing people, and many an emaciated form was stretched at the corners of the streets, voiceless, scarcely breathing, and soliciting aid only with a despairing look or feebly extended hand.

As might have been expected, pestilence soon supervened on this state of distress. On the 15th of December, the first two cases of cholera were reported, and the number of casualties gradually increased to thirty a day. The chief burial-ground of Tehran

lies close to the Shah Abdúl Azim Gate, and there was little pleasure in taking the road in that direction after the cholera had spread, for it was impossible to pass without meeting one or two funerals, the corpse being carried muffled up without any coffin on a sort of shutter.

But a still heavier calamity than either famine or pestilence happened in Khurásán, as in addition to a frightful loss of life, the prestige of the Government was impaired, and its strength paralyzed by a disastrous defeat. In an evil moment the Shah had been persuaded by the intrigues of the late Sadr Azim to deprive his best viceroy, Sultan Murad Mirza, of the government of Khurásán, and had bestowed it on that prince's younger brother, Hamza Mirza. But Hamza Mirza had no real power, and the Kawámu 'd daulah, the vazir of the province, a man quite ignorant of military matters, was the *de facto* governor. This person persuaded the Shah to give orders for an expedition to Merv, the stronghold of the Takí Turkumans, a tribe that can bring 40,000 horsemen into the field. The Persian army, almost as numerous as the fighting

men of the Takis, and with thirty guns, occupied Merv without difficulty, and might have retained it, had they been ably commanded and properly supplied with stores. There is an old fort at Merv, which might have been repaired, and there was no want of water and forage. But the Persians were improvident enough to move out into a place intersected with innumerable streams, where they could neither advance nor retire. The miserable Kawámu 'd daulah went off with a party of horse, and the whole army was captured or destroyed. This disaster exposed the north-eastern frontier of Persia to the attacks of the Turkuman marauders, and many were the villages sacked and captives led off to hopeless slavery in consequence.

While public matters had assumed this gloomy tinge, my own personal comfort had been considerably broken in upon by a new regulation as to the way in which the business of the Mission should be conducted. When I was first appointed secretary of legation, I was told my duties would not be very onerous, that the first attaché would have the control of the chancellerie, and that I should not be called

upon to take the labouring oar till Mr. Alison went away on leave, when the management of affairs would devolve on me. I had never been one to decline work, but there were peculiar reasons at Tehran why I wished to be, as far as possible, independent, and, therefore, the prescribed arrangements chimed in with my wishes. I kept myself *au fait* with all that was going on, set about collecting materials for a commercial report, and made myself generally useful, but Mr. W. Dickson went daily to Mr. Alison, took his orders, and acted as the medium of communication with the staff of the Mission. That gentleman and his brother, Dr. Dickson, having been, like Mr. Alison, born and educated in the Levant, possessed tastes congenial to his, and were better suited for confidential intercourse with him than I could pretend to be. But in the beginning of 1861 an order was issued that all the business of Her Majesty's missions should be carried on through the secretaries of legation, and I was thus brought into continual contact with Mr. Alison.

Marshal Turenne, we are told, had a pleasant way of saying, whenever a spy was taken: "Mon-

sieur, either you or I will assuredly be hanged!" a formula which always resulted unfavourably for the person addressed. Something in the same way the head of the Mission said to me one day in February, "Either you or I must proceed to Resht; a matter has occurred which renders the presence of one of us necessary." As my health was indifferent, and the Caspian provinces are notoriously unhealthy, the expedition was not one I should have chosen for mere pleasure, but coming in the form it did, the proposition could not be declined.

The first step I took in preparing for my journey was to rid myself of Rahím, whose charges had now become so exorbitant that they threatened to absorb my whole salary. "Rahím," I said, "I am not like Kárún, the possessor of unlimited wealth; but even Kárún himself could not satisfy your ever-increasing demands! Let us part, then, and I wish you a better master, and myself a more economical servant." This announcement was so little expected, that, with all his conceit, Rahím was at first profoundly disconcerted, but he soon recovered himself, and some months afterwards called upon me glittering

in silks and gold, to say that he had obtained a post of importance; as, indeed, appeared, from the number of servants in attendance on him.

Before starting for Resht, I was requested by Mr. Alison to go with him on a tour he was about to make in the district of Virámín, which lies between Tehran and the Great Salt Desert of Persia.

The 20th of February was the day we left Tehran for Virámín. I mounted at 2.30 P.M. a little chestnut horse that had belonged to Jamál, a famous freebooter at Marand, who had many times been saved by its speed and endurance. It was one of the few Persian horses I ever saw that could jump well, and had no objection to a stone wall or a fence, any more than to a brook or a ditch. Mr. Watson, one of the attachés, rode it from Karich to Tehran, twenty-four miles, and came in before Mr. Fane, who had three horses on the road, and did his best to win. At 4.30 P.M. I reached Talibábád, a village twelve miles south-east of Tehran, belonging to the Nusratú'd daulah, where we were to pass the night. If you want to learn the secret infirmities of a nation, get off the high road into

the by-ways. There you see the nakedness of the land, the ugly features without a mask. This village belonged to a prince of the blood, a man, too, of great worth and dignity of character; yet the place called his house was such that any English farmer of the lowest grade would have turned up his nose at it. The tenement was of mud, the sitting-room smoked in such a way that a horizontal position on the floor was the only one practicable, and the windows in the bed-rooms yielded at once to the insolent night airs that entered without ceremony into the innermost nook of the apartments.

Next morning I galloped across some rough ground about a mile and a half to Asiábád, where is a vast artificial mound, on which are the remains of a world-old fire-temple. There are many such mounds all over Virámín, but this is the most remarkable, and the only one on which are ruins of importance. It lies west of Talibábád, and is 200 feet high and 347 feet in extreme length, but with a lower spur of 90 feet more. The extreme breadth is 291 feet; the interior length of the building on it is 90 feet; the centre aisle is 23 feet

broad, and the side aisles 8 feet. Each buttress is 10 feet thick. The extreme breadth of the building is 79 feet, and the greatest height of the wall now remaining 37 feet. From the summit of the mound, which is very steep, is a view over some forty miles of plain. The earth is very friable and there is a white efflorescence, the token of saltpetre. The walls of the temple are of layers of bricks or tiles, each about three inches thick, one foot long, and ten inches broad, and so hard that it is most difficult to break them. These layers alternate with sandstone, pudding-stone, and pumice, joined with a white flint cement which has hardened the whole mass into a rock. The building runs from north-west to south-east. It is impossible now to trace the plan, but the temple must have been a noble object in a plain so vast and so level. A small plant like the ice-plant is the only vegetation observable.

At 1 P.M. we rode to Jafirábád Abu 'l Hasan, thirteen miles distant. The road was through deep soil intersected with watercourses from the Jáj-rúd river, which descends from the Elburz and fertilizes the whole district of Virámín. At Jafirábád there

is what a sportsman would call a lovely marsh for snipe. We shot some ducks and snipe there, when it began to rain hard, with an icy blast that there was no resisting, so we got under cover as fast as possible. Nothing is easier than to lose one's way in this country. The villages all resemble one another, and there are no landmarks to guide travellers. The house we lodged in belonged to the son of Mirza Abúl Hasan Khan, whilom ambassador to England, and then minister for foreign affairs, and, what is more, the identical *Elchi* drawn by Hajji Baba. He invested a large sum in East India securities, and that is nearly all that remains to his family, who, as this money cannot be sold out, are prevented from quite ruining themselves. The villa had been a fine one, but it was going with railroad speed to ruin. Portions of the ceiling dropped on our heads as we sat at dinner, and a huge *lacuna* marked the spot where a fragment had descended which must have weighed 20 lbs.

The morning of the 22nd of February struggled with difficulty into existence from a thick night of clouds and driving rain and snow. At 1 P.M. Mr.

Alison got out of bed and resolved on returning immediately to Tehran, a determination which was met by a declaration on the part of the muleteers that their animals could not get through the deep mud into which the whole district had been transformed by the rain of the previous night. As mules are "stubborn things," and they who drive them more stubborn still, there was nothing for it but to acquiesce. At 2.30 P.M. we rode across country to see the celebrated ruin called *Kalah i Iraj*, alias Europus, alias Rhages, in its second stage of existence, when it had migrated to the edge of the salt desert. The word Rhages is probably derived from Iraj. The ruin lies two miles south-west of Jafirábád. The walls are of mud, perhaps fifty feet high, and very thick. The interior is a parallelogram 1,800 yards long by 1,500 yards broad. In it were patches of wheat six inches high, and out of one of them our greyhounds started a hare, of a silver-gray colour. We had a famous gallop through the fort and out over a breach in the wall, but lost the hare at last. We then rode to the town of Virámín, which, no doubt, was a populous place a thousand

years ago. Now there are about 3,000 inhabitants. The ruins of the old city extend over an area equal to that at present covered by Tehran. The most conspicuous object is the castle, a square mud building, each side extending about 1,000 feet. The walls are 100 feet high. There is also a mosque of burnt brick built by Bahádur Sultán. The interior is beautifully ornamented with reliefs representing leaves, flowers, and scrolls, cut in stone. Some of the Kufik inscriptions are eighteen inches broad, in blue and white.

Next day at 2 P.M., as soon as Mr. Alison was up, we started for Hisár Amír, twelve miles off, a hunting-seat belonging to the Shah. The Persian Caleb Balderstone, at Jafirábád, refused during a very decorous interval to receive any present, maintaining that the honour of his master's family would be impaired, if the hospitality were paid for. When, however, there appeared on our side symptoms of being tired out by his pertinacity and the purse was about to close, he suddenly gave in, and pocketed thirteen tumans, 6*l.* 10*s.*, with surprising alacrity.

The road led us nearly due north, over a heavy

country cut up by watercourses, to Hisár Amir, a village of about one hundred houses, situated at the foot of the mountains east of Tehran. The Shah's villa was a poor one, indeed, for royalty. The windows and ceilings were broken and battered, and the walls defaced with scribbling. At night we were disturbed by legions of cats, some of them actually descending by the chimneys, which are straight and roomy, and more adapted for letting in such intruders than for letting out smoke.

Next morning I galloped back to Tehran—a ride of about twenty-five miles, starting about 9 A.M., and getting in at noon. The ground was white with snow, which fell fast, accompanied by a terribly cold, biting wind. Eight miles from Tehran the road enters a defile, the mountain which overlooks the ruins of Rhages being on the left. So ended in complete failure what was intended as a sporting tour, but the sportsman in Persia requires sinews of iron, and an ardour not to be damped by heat, cold, thirst, or starvation.

The distress in Tehran was now culminating, and, the roads being almost impassable, supplies of

corn could not reach the city. The bakers' shops were besieged by mobs clamouring for bread. As soon as a European showed himself in the streets he was surrounded by famishing women, supplicating assistance, who were not to be kept back by any scruples of their own, or remonstrances of the men. Matters were evidently growing very serious, and on the 1st of March, as Mr. Alison and myself were sitting at Mr. Dickson's examining the Nauroz presents for the servants, the chief Persian secretary came in, pale and trembling, and said there was an émeute, and that the Kalántar, or mayor of the city, had just been put to death, and that they were dragging his body stark naked through the bazars. Presently we heard a great tumult, and on going to the windows saw the streets filled with thousands of people, in a very excited state, surrounding the corpse, which was being dragged to the place of execution, where it was hung up by the heels, naked, for three days.

On inquiry we learned that on the 28th of February, the Shah, on coming in from hunting, was surrounded by a mob of several thousand women,

yelling for bread, who gutted the bakers' shops of their contents, under the very eyes of the king, and were so violent, that as soon as the Shah had entered the palace, he ordered the gates of the citadel to be shut.

Next day, the 1st of March, the disturbances were renewed, and, in spite of the gates being closed, thousands of women made their way into the citadel, and began to assail the guards with large stones, being urged on by their male relatives, who under cover of this attack, were looking out for an opportunity to effect a more serious rise. Meantime, the Shah had ascended the tower, from which Hajji Baba's Zainab was thrown, and was watching the rioters with a telescope. The Kalántar, who had been seen just before entering the palace, splendidly dressed, with a long retinue of servants, went up the tower and stood by the Shah, who reproached him for suffering such a tumult to have arisen. On this the Kalántar declared he would soon put down the riot, and going amongst the women with his servants, he himself struck several of them furiously with a large stick. One of the women so assailed ran as far as

the English Mission, and came in calling out for help, and showing her clothes covered with blood. On the women vociferously calling for justice, and showing their wounds, the Shah summoned the Kalántar, and said, "If thou art thus cruel to my subjects before my eyes, what must be thy secret misdeeds!" Then turning to his attendants, the king said,—"Bastinado him, and cut off his beard." And again, while this sentence was being executed, the Shah uttered that terrible word, *Tanáb!* "Strangle him." * In a moment the executioners had placed the cord round the unhappy man's neck, and in an instant more their feet were on his chest, trampling out the last signs of life. At the same time the Kadkhudas, or magistrates of all the quarters of Tehran were subjected to the bastinado, and at sight of these punishments, the frenzy of the populace was for that day appeased, and Tehran was saved by a hair's breadth from a revolution.

The next day the Shah appeared dressed in a red robe, as a sign that severe measures would be adopted,

* Literally, "rope."

and several other persons were punished, so that the mob, though terribly excited, were kept in awe. Several tumultuous assemblies, however, took place, in one of which the Imám Juma, or High Priest, was nearly thronged to death, and was rescued in a swooning state from the multitude. It was also proposed that all the women of Tehran should divide themselves into two bodies, and go the one mass to the English envoy, and the other to the Russian minister, and call on them to speak to the Shah to give them food. Subsequently a multitude of women did actually enter the English Mission with the said intention, and were not got rid of without trouble, and so excited were they that the law of the "veil" was quite disregarded.

In the midst of these troubles, I started on my journey to the Caspian, accompanied by Fane. Mr. Alison had offered me a Persian secretary, or an attaché, as an assistant, and I chose the latter, partly to oblige Fane, and partly because I think if a man can conduct his own correspondence in the Oriental languages, it is much better he should do so. Besides, the Persians are wonderfully impressed by

lofty stature, and it was something to have a companion six feet four inches high. Indeed, as if to flatter that weakness of the Irânis, each Mission, Russian, French, and English, had a tall, and quasi-representative member, the Englishman being the tallest. To compensate for this fact, the Frenchman always *said* he was the tallest, and with characteristic national vanity really believed himself to be so; while the Russian, on account of his intellectual gifts, might be said to be taller by a head, so that each country had its appropriate triumph, France in idea, Russia by a metaphor, and England in fact.

At 3 P.M. on the 4th of March, 1861, we left Tehran by the Daulat Gate, and rode for our first stage to Kand, a pretty village embosomed in trees at the mouth of a gorge in the Elburz, whence issues a clear stream, in which are silver fish, and, near the source, trout. The distance is called two farsakhs, but is really ten miles, for though we walked our horses very briskly, and cantered occasionally, we did not get in till 5.30. The Shah has a small hunting seat at Kand, in which we lodged for the night. The hills

near are strictly preserved, and at his annual visit the Shah kills some seventy *mouflons*, and a few scores of partridges and other birds. The royal ladies often attend the King on these expeditions, and it is astonishing how they can be contented with the scanty accommodation the place affords.

On the 5th we mounted at 11.30 A.M., just as the rain changed into hail, and then into snow. Passing through the village we descended some 200 feet into a ravine, on each side of which were ten or twelve terraces of mulberry-trees. Emerging from this curious place, we crossed the Kand river, issuing from the mountain gorge. It was about a yard deep, forty feet broad, and very rapid. The banks were covered with reeds and low jungle, affording good cover for game. The snow now began to fall more heavily, and the road, after the first three miles, changed to deep clay, through which our horses toiled with difficulty. At 4.30 P.M. we reached Karich, which is said to be four farsakhs, but is probably eighteen miles from Kand. The village is situated at the mouth of a gorge in the mountains, whence issues the Karich river, a stream on which several scores of villages

depend. In line with the palace of Sulaimániyah, the river parts into two or three channels, and is, therefore, in general, fordable; but half a mile further up towards the mountains, it is too deep and rapid to be forded, and a red brick bridge, with one large and one small arch, has been thrown across it. In this bridge Fath Ali Shah built a room, where he used to drink tea and enjoy the cool breeze. On the Tehran side of the bridge there is a curious village in the side of the mountain, the houses being excavations, a village of Troglodytes, in short.

The village of Karich contains about sixty houses, besides the Shah's palace, called Sulaimániyah. This building was erected by Fath Ali Shah, in A. H. 1228= A.D. 1808. It has a tower to the east, ascended by fifty steps, each step eighteen inches high. To the north-west of this are two courts, and, beyond these, three others. The most remarkable room is one near the tower, in which are two large pictures done by Abdullah Khan, Nakkaish bashi, or "chief painter," to Fath Ali Shah, and who is still living at Tehran. The picture on the east side of the room represents the

court of the famous eunuch-king, Agha Muhammad Shah, who founded the Kájár dynasty in 1785. It contains portraits of the following personages in the order indicated:—

Mustafa Kuli Khan Kajar.
Mahdi Kuli Khan Kajar.
Murtaza Kuli Khan Kajar.
Jafir Kuli Khan Kajar.
Ali Kuli Khan Kajar.
Abbas Kuli Khan Kajar.
Riza Kuli Khan Kajar.

Agha Muhammad Shah.

Muhammad Kuli Khan Kajar.
Shah Kuli Khan Kajar.
Muhammad Hasan Khan Kajar.
Jahán Súz Shah.
Mahdi Khan Kajar.
Fath Ali Khan Kajar.

The manly beauty of these chiefs is something quite wonderful. Probably there never was a family in the world containing so many handsome men as that of the Kájárs. Their dress, too, is most becoming. They wear mail armour, and look like Paladins. Jahán Súz Shah and Mahdi Khan have bows. The majority have red boots, and Fath Ali has a sort of armorial bearings engraved on his arm, with a dress like that of our hussars. Agha Muhammad Shah has noble features, with a cruel expression. He is like one of the Cæsars, Domitian, if I remember rightly. He wears an Uzbek crown.

The picture on the opposite side represents the

court of Fath Ali Shah, with portraits of the following princes :—

Ali Khan Mirza.		Ali Naki Mirza.
Muhammad Vali Mirza.		Muhammad Kuli Mirza.
Abbas Mirza.	Fath Ali Shah.	Sulaiman Mirza.
Muhammad Ali Mirza.		Husain Ali Mirza.
Hasan Ali Mirza.		Haidar Kuli Mirza.
Muhammad Taki Mirza.		Shekh Ali Mirza.
Imam Verdi Mirza.		

Under this picture is written, "This is the throne of Fath Ali Shah, the Darius of the age." Fath Ali Shah wears the Táj i Jikadár, or Kaianian crown.

The only other noteworthy thing in the room is the marble slabs, of which there are three at the doorways. The marble is yellow, and very transparent. The palace keeper said it was brought from Shiráz. The same extortionate caitiff charged us twelve shillings for firewood for the two nights we lodged in the palace, and everything in proportion. During the whole of the 6th it snowed and blew such a hurricane that we thought it best to halt. On the 7th, at 10.30 A.M., as the weather had improved, we started for Kurdán, four farsakhs, about sixteen miles,

and reached the village at 3 P.M. It contains 150 houses, and is Khalsah, that is, crown land. The soil is good, produces wheat, barley, and rice, and is irrigated by the Kurdán river, towards the source of which are, I was told, valuable mines of silver, which have been examined by European officers. We passed the night in a farmhouse, the approach to which was through a slough a foot deep in mud. Hens, dogs, cats, lean buffaloes, and braying asses surrounded us, and with their hideous noises murdered sleep. The house was a filthy mud hovel, of which a gipsy would have been ashamed. I vented my ill-humour by ironically inquiring of the Mission ghulám who attended me if the lodgings at the next stage would be like that. My indignation, however, was quite wasted, for the man replied very gravely, "Nah baín khúbí—Oh, not so *good* as this!" as if the miserable den allotted to me was something super-excellent.

We left Kurdán at 8.15 A.M., and passed through a mile of mud in a direction north-west of the village, which has extensive gardens of mulberry-trees. We now began to enter the hills that run

from the foot of a range of mountains parallel to and overtopped by the range which divides Mazanderún from the table-land of Persia. After a mile or so we came to the Kurdán river, which we crossed by a bridge like that at Karich, but much more ancient, and in rather a dilapidated state. The river was not more than a yard deep, but very rapid, and about forty feet broad. The guide, a stout youth, who kept up with our horses with the greatest ease, said that in spring the stream was unfordable. He likewise spoke of the lead and silver mines on the course of the river, and said they were about four miles off, and that he had seen the specimens of ore brought down from them by a M. Schlimmer.

The hilly country we had now entered was entirely covered with snow. We passed a fine village called Chandni, belonging to Sulaiman Khan, and one smaller, also his, after which we ascended considerably till we were, perhaps, 1,000 feet above Kurdán. The snow lay in many places a yard deep, and the horses floundered about in it so that our progress was slow. At one place I was nearly losing a chestnut Turkuman horse, on which my Jilaudar,

Asad Beg, was mounted. Asad would persist in attempting to cross a frozen stream, the ice of which would have hardly supported a man on foot, and gave way just when the horse had reached the middle. The poor beast sank up to his neck, and it was only by great and united efforts that we managed to drag and flog him out. After an hour or so we came to the sanctuary of an Imámzádah, Sulaimán, the son of Zain'l Abidín. About a mile from this is Hir, a large village, watered by a fine stream called the Kúr, and belonging to Mirza Musa, the vazír of Tehran. Here we took a second guide, and rode a mile and a quarter to see some coal mines, which may one day be of great importance. The road was now a continual ascent with high mountains close by. The rocks had a blackened tinge, and iron-stone was abundant. The hills, where the mines are, seem to consist of layers of sandstone, earth, iron-stone, and coal. No work was going on, as the snow lay two feet deep, and the pits were full of water. The view from the principal diggings is fine, as the spot is at least 1,000 feet above the plain through which the road to Kazvín passes, and

is placed in a kind of amphitheatre of frowning rocks with a deep ravine at their feet running almost due west four miles, and then for two more miles turning south till it issues in the plain. In the centre of this ravine was a clear, rapid streamlet, from five to seven feet broad, and from one to two feet deep.

The coal is got by digging circular wells about five feet in diameter, the sides of which, perhaps, generally fall in or fill with water, for most of them were very shallow, though I examined one which seemed to be about thirty feet in depth. I saw only one very distinct stratum of coal. It was a foot thick at two yards from the surface, and dipped at an angle of 80°. The coal lay about the pits in heaps, and the guide said it was a túmán a kharwar, or 9*s.* 6*d.* for a quarter of a ton, which is about what coal sells for in Tehran, where it is procured from mines much nearer than these. There were no large blocks, and it seemed light and brittle, and had a glittering appearance, with occasional red stains. The guide said these mines were four farsakhs from Kurdán, but they seem to me about eighteen miles from that place.

At 3 P.M. we descended into the ravine and found patches of grass near the rivulet. The guide said wolves were very numerous and troublesome, sometimes going in packs of thirty. He showed the place where a friend of his had been eaten that year by nine wolves, though he did not state who it was that counted them. However, as if in corroboration of his statement, I picked up the shoulder of a wolf recently severed, for it was quite fresh. The muscle and weight of the limb quite surprised me. The outlet of the ravine was fine. A magnificent naked crag, some 1,500 feet high, frowned on the left, where the guide said were abundance of wild goats, and snakes as thick as his leg. Here we passed a village of Iliyát, migratory tribes, who hive in the plains in winter, and on the mountain side in summer. These were Uzbek Kurds, and a wilder set could not be imagined. We bought two lambs of them, one for five shillings, and the other for four, both larger and finer than that for which the palace-keeper at Karich asked ten shillings.

Thence for four miles the road lay through a fine plain, in which were patches of herbage of great

extent. In one of these patches, a herd of eight deer were grazing. We reached, at 5 P.M., the village of Gázir i Sang, "the stone washerman," so called from an impious *blanchisseur* who was metamorphosed for disobedience to the Prophet. The whole distance from Kurdán to Gázir, including our détour to the mines, was about twenty-seven miles.

I rose at 6 A.M. on the 9th of March after an almost sleepless night. I had continually fancied myself suffocating, and could not imagine what made the air so oppressive, as my room had a window with open lattice-work and the weather was cold. The enigma was soon explained. My servants had taken possession of the porch to the miserable cabin in which I was lodged, and, lest I should hear them snoring and cause them to remove, had jammed up the window with clothes in such a way that not a particle of air could enter. I was not the only party that suffered by this grievance, for a cat, who, before we went to bed, had discovered and appropriated a pot of Fane's sardines, had returned to ask, like Oliver Twist, for more, and, finding no entrance, had

been scratching away incessantly to dislodge the clothes from the windows, with a strange noise, which had been the subject of curious meditation to me during my sleepless hours.

Gázir being a village belonging to Mirza Musa, the Vazír of Tehran, we had to pay exorbitantly for everything. A little firewood, for example, cost us five shillings. Shaking off the mud from our feet in indignation, we started at 10.30 A.M. and reached the village of Hisár, said to be five farsakhs, but in reality twenty-eight miles, from Gázir, at 7 P.M. The road lay through a magnificent plain, from forty to fifty miles in breadth, bounded on either side by mountains, and watered by many small streams. In many places there were patches of grass, and everywhere else bushes, the camel-thorn, and abundance of rough herbage. We saw enough to assure us that corn might be grown in this plain for the consumption of all Persia. The air was delicious, and we walked about six miles on foot very pleasantly. About twelve miles from Gázir we passed a ruined kárwánsarái. As the walls were five feet thick I am inclined to think an earthquake must have

destroyed the edifice, too strong to have fallen simply from neglect. Hisár lies about two miles beyond three remarkable black hills jutting out from the mountain range. On the summit of the highest is a curious black stone standing like a pillar by itself.

Hisár is but a poor village. We left it at 11.30 A.M. on the 10th of March, and soon got into deep mud, full of holes made by mules and camels that had preceded us. At intervals of a mile or two we fell in with five waggons loaded with apparatus for steam-engines, and abandoned by the road-side. We met some men, who told us the waggons were transporting things for the *chilwakhánah* at Tehran, and, having stuck fast in the mud and snow, had been abandoned. At one place, about three miles from Kazvín, there were about forty or fifty men struggling to move one of these waggons with great noise and little result. At this place the mud was from a foot to two feet deep, and our horses suffered much in getting through it. We reached Kazvín at 4 P.M. The distance is called three farsakhs, but is a good twelve miles. We were met at the gate of the city, and conducted

to the house of Hájí Muhammad Husain, a rich merchant, to whom we had a letter of introduction. His house of burnt brick is situated half a mile from the city gate. We passed down a covered passage about eighty feet long to the house, where the Hájí's son, a youth of eighteen, received us at the door. On entering the house we pulled off our boots and walked in our socks to the reception-room. Our feet were tolerably chilled by this operation, but we had to sit through an interview with the Hájí before we could warm them. We sate on chairs and our host on the edge of the carpet on which our chairs were placed. The Hájí said he had several sons, but he would not mention the exact number lest the Evil Eye, *alias* Nemesis, should make him pay for the statement. He said that other countries fostered merchants, but Persia destroyed them, and added there was no *Nazm*, "order," in Persia.

It rained heavily all the night of the 10th, and was still raining on the 11th. As soon as we were dressed a courier just arrived from Resht came to tell us of the state of the road. He said he had taken five days to accomplish a journey usually done

in one. As to the road he said that for the first three farsakhs, from Kazvín to Ah Bábá, there was some mud; and for the next three, from Ah Bábá to Kharzán, the mud and melting snow were beyond all description; that there were then thirteen farsakhs of good dry road, and from Kohdhün to Resht again three farsakhs of abominable mud. He added that bread was three kiráns the *man*, about three shillings the 5 lbs., at Resht.

In the afternoon, the rain having cleared off a little, we took a walk with the Hájí, who said to me, "As you are now an old man you should be careful of the damp." Slightly affronted, I inquired how old he thought me. "Well," he said, "I make no doubt you are fifty-two, but, perhaps, a year or two older." I said, "You judge by my wisdom, which is friendly of you, but I cannot claim more than forty-seven winters." Talking of the famine he said he remembered one much more severe at Yezd about thirty-four years ago. Mothers ate their children, and goats' blood was sold by ounces. He inquired the amount of Fane's pay, and said it was very little, and that he would give him 1,200 tumans a year, about 580*l.*,

to enter his service. I did my best to extract some hints from the Hájí as to improving the trade of Persia, but he was too wary to supply aught but platitudes and generalities.

The 12th came with little prospect of continuing our journey, as from the courier's report we knew the roads were almost impassable, and the rain never ceased. At 3 P.M., in spite of the rain, we mounted and rode half a mile on the Resht road, to make a reconnaissance. A roaring torrent was rushing through the middle of the city, threatening to wash away the neighbouring houses, several of which had, indeed, already succumbed. Outside the city a furious stream was rushing past the walls. The guide said that six years ago this mountain torrent entered by the Shekhábád Gate, and destroyed a great part of the town. Since then Mirza Musa, when Vazír of Kazvín, built a breakwater about six feet high, which keeps the water off from the city walls. We crossed the stream several times. It was about a yard deep, and rushed like a mill-race.

Returning from our reconnaissance, we re-entered the city by the Shekhábád, or south-eastern gate.

Thence we passed from the Masjid i Sháh, or Royal Mosque, begun by Agha Muhammad Sháh, and finished by Fath Ali Sháh, to the palace of the Governor, an immense building, with a magnificent portal eighty or ninety feet high, painted all over with figures of birds, beasts, and trees. I felt a pang of regret at seeing so fine a building in decay. We then rode along a broad avenue called the Khiyábán, to the principal mosque, a gigantic building of brick, faced with coloured tiles. There are two lofty minarets covered with blue tiles, now defaced and battered. From the portal to the place of prayer appeared to me to be about 180 feet. Then comes the place of prayer, with the minarets rising above a building with seven fine arches, and beyond these a court 200 feet long by 80 feet broad. Altogether it is a prodigious structure. No one could tell me anything about the founder, but one man said the mosque was built by a black slave, and ruined by Changiz Khán.

Kazvín fell into the hands of Hasan Sabáh, the prince of the assassins, in A.D. 1078, and the ruins of his famous castle of Alamút are not far distant. In

1523 we must suppose Kazvín was a flourishing city, as it was then the capital of Shah Tahmásp. In 1723, the Afghans, with 6,000 men, took possession of it, but the citizens having agreed on a Lúti bázár, or *émeute*, rose and drove out their oppressors, killing 2,000 of them. Two years afterwards the Turks, under Ahmed Pasha, entered the city, but were soon expelled. Kazvín is well placed for being the capital of Persia, and the coal-mines in the neighbourhood would be of great value in case of a railroad between it and Tehran.

Our ride was saddened by the piteous spectacle of bakers' shops besieged by crowds of famishing women, and children stretched on the ground in the last stage of emaciation, with none to care for them. At 6 P.M. a tremendous thunder-storm came on, with showers of hail. Peal after peal reverberated in the mountains, and the lightning blazed incessantly.

On the 13th the weather cleared, but we were unable to procure mules, so were obliged to halt. The Hájí told me his house cost 20,000 túmáns, about 10,000*l*. The principal reception-room is perfect of its kind. It is 32 feet long, and 20 feet

broad, exclusive of recesses from 7 to 9 feet deep. On entering, you have these arched recesses, beautifully carved and decorated, on your right hand, and on your left a window of painted glass, extending the whole length of the room. These painted windows are exceedingly tasteful, but, as there is no such thing as putty in Persia, the glass soon falls out, and is continually rattling with every wind.

The 14th was ushered in with the disagreeable intelligence that the river had swept away twenty-two houses during the night, and that there was a bread riot in the city. The mob had plundered all the bakers' shops, and now no bread could be got. The Hájí, who is a meagre, sallow man, with cunning eyes, made his appearance, looking very miserable, and said the Governor was in great alarm, and that things were in a ticklish state. He begged us not to show ourselves in the streets, as he said the mob was so excited we should very likely be attacked. We nevertheless mounted, and rode out of the town to reconnoitre, and to see if we could shoot some game. On the Resht road we met a caravan coming in, that had been eight days on the road from Resht.

They said they had had one man and seven mules drowned at Kharzán, and were obliged to go back, for that day, to the place they had started from. I killed a sand grouse or two, and we returned to the Háji's house at 4 P.M., and found that the mob had broken into the Governor's palace, and that there had been a collision between them and his people, in consequence of which he had telegraphed to Tehran for instructions.

CHAPTER XII.

Departure from Kazvín—Ah Bábá—Dangerous march from Ah Bábá to Kharzán—Páchanau—Manjíl—The White River—Rúdbár and its Olive Forests—Rustamábád—Mount Darfek—Enter the Forests of Ghilán—Shrine of the Imámzádah Háshem—Jungle Village of Salawán—An Istikbál, or Persian Reception Party—Resht.

One consequence of the famine of 1861 was a great mortality among the beasts of burden, which in Persia form the sole means of transport, carts being unknown. The muleteers, in fact, being obliged to lay out all the money they had for their own food, could not afford to buy grain for their mules, many of which were starved to death. Carriage, therefore, became enormously expensive, as we found to our cost, for we had to pay forty túmáns for the same number of mules from Kazvín to Resht as those for which we had paid, from Tehran to Kazvín,

seventeen túmáns, though the distance is about the same. We left Kazvín at 10.15 A.M., and arrived at Ah Bábá at 3 P.M.

For the first farsakh and a half the road passed through deep muddy ground to the village of Mahmúdábád. It then entered the hills and ascended to Ah Bábá, which is several hundred feet above Kazvín. The whole stage was three farsakhs, or twelve miles. Ah Bábá seems to have its name, "Heigho," from the sigh of satisfaction that some one heaved on getting to it, after the execrable journey from Kharzán, like the Scotch "Rest and be thankful!" The place was almost deserted, owing to three bad seasons in succession. Perhaps seventy families were left. The poisonous bug, or rather tick, the *Argas Persicus*, is found at this village. The whole road was lined with people emigrating from Kazvín on account of the famine. They seemed to be people of the lowest class, with the exception of one woman, who was very respectably dressed. She carried a child of two years in her arms, while a little toddler of about five followed her. Several of the throng importuned us for alms. We passed three or four large villages. One on the

right hand beyond Mahmúdábád was entirely deserted.

We put up at Ah Bábá in the house of Háji Ahmed, chief of the merchants at Kazvín, the proprietor of the village. Every one there looked thin and haggard.

At 8.40 on the morning of the 16th of March, we left for Kharzán; the road for this stage, which is the *bête noir* of the Resht route, being reported *bisyár khúb*, "very good." How far this was the truth, pure and simple, we were soon to see. The distance, by a happy irony, is called three farsakhs, but, by the way we went, it could not be far short of twenty miles. The road for the first five miles, as far as Mazraa, a village in a ravine, washed by a small but rapid stream, was so good that we began to suspect there had been gross exaggeration in the accounts we had received of the difficulties of the journey. The ground over which we passed was indeed spongy, and of a kind likely to be troublesome in wet weather, but in a clear, cold day, like that of our march, we got on very well. At Mazraa, however, we found a small caravan of some eight or ten men on

mules, who said they had attempted to get to Kharzán, and had been obliged to return. They earnestly dissuaded us from proceeding, and when we said we were resolved to continue our journey, they quite *cackled* with terror as to the dangers of the expedition. Still, thinking that it was only Persian exaggeration, we took a *balad*, or guide, from the village, and went on. As the ordinary route was entirely blocked up with snow, the guide took us over hills, which continually increased in height and difficulty. The Kazvín side of these hills was cold, stormy, and tolerably free from snow, but in many places very muddy. The Kharzán side presented a series of ravines filled with snow, from a yard to ten feet deep, worn in places into deep holes. Here our horses floundered miserably, every one of them coming down a score of times, and rolling about in the snow. Sometimes it was quite ludicrous to see them sitting up to their necks, while the grooms were trying to pull them out, and other men were poking them to make them exert themselves. Of course we were very soon obliged to leave the saddle, and we walked nearly all the way from Mazraa, plunging at one moment into mud up

to our knees, with huge sharp stones at intervals that scarified our shins, and at the next into deep snow. At 2.30 P.M. we overtook Ali Akbar, the cook, who had already been eight hours on the road, having started at 6 A.M., and who was exhausting the little breath left to him in anathematizing the day he was born, also that on which he left Tabríz, and, above all, the unlucky moment on which he had started on this journey.

We soon passed the wretched *cuisinier*, although we stopped to munch a cold partridge and some bread. Soon after this we began to descend, and at 3.30 P.M. reached a pass, in the centre of which flowed a stream overarched by masses of snow, in some places twenty feet thick. Here the whole way was lined with vultures, kites, crows, and ravens, gorged with the flesh of camels and mules that had perished in attempts to cross this terrible defile. The ravens came flapping heavily past us, seeming to expect a fresh meal upon us. Indeed, it was literally a Valley of Death; for to say nothing of the carcases of animals that lay about, we sate down to rest in a spot where there were five small tumuli, and we after-

wards learned that they were the graves of five unfortunate travellers who had been frozen to death there a few days before. In these regions all depends on the wind. As long as the air is still, though the cold may be intense, the traveller can make his way, unless, indeed, he should be engulfed in some such places as those we several times passed, where the snow was many feet deep, but, being quite hard, formed bridges across chasms, at the bottom of which was a stream. There, had the snow given way, it would have been difficult or impossible to recover a lapsed companion, and the rest of the party would probably have contented themselves with voting him a *bene discessit*, and so passed on. Far different is the case when the terrible *burrán*, or "snow tempest," blows. The icy blast freezes the life blood in the veins, and comes with such furious strength that it is impossible to make head against it. Numbers of persons perish every year in Persia, caught in these storms; but were the deaths ten times as numerous no one would care. What, indeed, is man in such vast solitudes as these! An interminable succession of hills and ravines stretches on and on,

covered with snow, and without signs of habitation, though here and there at very great distances a frozen-up village exists; but the inhabitants of these are shut in by the snow, and subsist, like the ants, on the grain they have stored for the winter.

We reached Kharzán, a village of fifteen houses, a little before sunset, having been seven hours in struggling over the last twelve miles. As all our servants and things were left in the snow, we sent out ten peasants and two fresh mules to help them on, but this detachment returned before midnight, saying that they could not bring our party in, and that we must be patient and wait for the morning light. We passed a miserable night at Kharzán, and were nearly frozen, for the room smoked so dreadfully that, after many attempts to keep a fire, we were obliged to let it go out. I lay on two chairs and a hencoop, and never slept a moment all night, but debated whether of the twain was the more uncomfortable—to balance oneself on one's heels and the back of one's head, or on one's knees and chin. The kadkhuda, or head man of the village, entertained me at intervals with accounts of the people who had perished in the snow that winter,

interlarding his narrative with pious ejaculations to the Prophet and the Seven Holy Personages, to prevent the wind from rising, "for if it blow strong," quoth he, "it will go hard with your servants."

At 10 A.M., on the 17th, the servants arrived. They said they had made a fire with some wood and charcoal they were carrying with them, and having plenty of rugs and skins, had managed to get through the night, which, luckily for them, was quite still. We left Kharzán at noon, and got to Páchánau, three farsakhs, or twelve miles, at 3 P.M. The road was a steep descent the whole way, through wild ravines, with snow-covered mountains all around. The cry of partridges reached our ears frequently, and we saw many, but could not get within shot. The last part of the descent was excessively steep, and we then came to a valley, with the Páchánau river flowing through it. The bed of the river is quite 200 yards broad, but the water was low, and flowed in several separate streams of from six to forty feet broad, the broadest, deepest, and most rapid being on the far side from Kharzán. At this spot

a bridge is much required, as caravans are often detained from one to ten days before the river becomes fordable.

The kárwánsaráí at which we put up was a strong building of burnt brick, standing about 200 feet above the river, and had been built seventy-six years before by Hájí Hádi, a merchant of Miyáni, a town on the road to Tabríz. The view from the kárwánsaráí was striking. Looking down the road to Manzil, the next stage in the direction of Resht, my eyes followed the defile through which flowed the river Páchánau, closed in by a line of mountains topped with snow. In the opposite direction I saw a long gorge, down which rushed the river with a loud noise. These kárwánsaráis are quadrangular buildings, with arched recesses raised four or five feet from the ground all round. In these travellers lodge, while their mules, and other beasts, rove about in the open space below. There is some convenience and plenty of filth in these resting-places, with very little chance of getting anything to eat, so that a traveller must depend on his own supplies. We couched in a recess black with smoke, and with a rude aperture in the roof as a

chimney, which was also very handy for admitting the rain.

We left Páchánau at 10.30 A.M. for Manzil, and arrived there at 2.30 P.M. The distance is called three farsakhs, but is not less than fourteen miles. The road passes along beside the river for two miles, and then crosses it by a handsome brick bridge, with one small arch and two large ones. After that the road is very hard and good, and two miles from the bridge passes a small jungle and a large ruined village, with a fine mansion quite deserted.

Manzil is a flourishing village at the foot of the mountains, with quite an English look, except for a grove of olive-trees. About a mile off is another neat village, with olive-trees, where live some Armenians, subjects of Russia, who have established a manufactory of olive oil. The undertaking is, perhaps, not very prosperous, as from fifteen persons the colony had dwindled to eight. Manzil is a village of peasant proprietors, and pays 200 túmáns tax. We lodged in a small house belonging to the head man of the village, Vali Muhammad, who presented to us a package of violet soap, very black and hard, and a

lamb. The schoolboys of the place got a holiday in honour of our arrival, and deputed one of their number to recite a poem to us, in which we were said to be more liberal than Hatim, a compliment which cost us three shillings. Some itinerant minstrels also came, and sang religious songs in honour of Ali.

About four miles from Manzil are some beautiful retreats among the mountains for escaping the heats of summer. Bears, panthers and other wild animals are to be found there.

We left Manzil at 9.30 A.M., on the 19th, and after going about three-quarters of a mile came to the Sufíd Rúd, or White River, one of the greatest rivers in Persia. It is formed by the junction of the Manzil or Páchánau river with that of Miyáni, and is a rapid, turbid stream, not very deep, but 150 yards in breadth. The hills around are fine, and resemble those in the best part of Argyleshire. We crossed the river by a bridge with seven small arches and one large one. The Persian architecture for bridges is very peculiar. This bridge was paved with large stones, and had a good parapet, with steps to descend to the base of every arch. New as it was, however, I

observed in one place a tremendous crack in the masonry. The road now passed along the left bank of the river, constantly ascending and descending high rocks. In places it was very steep and rugged, and not by any means broad, so that, by a shy or stumble, one might be hurled over a precipice of from 100 to 1,200 feet deep. The river is about as broad as the Thames at Twickenham, with a rapid but shallow stream, so discoloured at this season by the mud washed from the hills, that the eye cannot penetrate one inch below the surface. Hence it would be useless to throw a fly, though salmon are said to be abundant. I saw a few wild duck.

About four miles from Manzil, we passed through the small town of Rúdbár, situated on the edge of the river, and among a forest of olive-trees, many of them from three to five feet in circumference, and from thirty to forty feet in height. The mountains were green with grass, and many fine olive-trees grew on their sides, some in groups, some singly. A tiny thunder-storm, which hung to one tall peak, seemed really brought in to add a new effect in a landscape already beautiful. Rúdbár, though now an insigni-

ficant place, is not without its niche in history. Its fort was one of the strongholds of Hasan Sabáh, the old man of the mountains, second only to Alamút in celebrity. There, too, in 1063 A. D., died the renowned conqueror, Togral Bey, founder of the Seljuk dynasty. After overrunning Persia, subduing the capital of the Khalifs, and after keeping the world in terror, he expired at Rúdbár. In eastern phrase it would be said the spirit of war sank to rest among the olive groves of peace.

Beyond Rúdbár the river expands still more. It is like the Severn in colour, but far broader. A quarter of a mile before reaching the post-station of Rustamábád, where we alighted at 3.30 P.M., we passed a strongly-built kárwánsarái, at which it would have been better had we stopped, for anything more filthy than Rustamábád station could not well be conceived. The den in which I tried to sleep was black as Erebus. Festoons of filth garnished the ceiling, and shed their flowers on my devoted head, while rats and all sorts of ugly creatures squeaked and rustled in the rubbish of which the walls were composed.

Before starting on the 20th, I had some talk with

the station-master. He said that game was abundant near the village. There were, he assured me, hares innumerable, wolves, leopards, wild hog, and a few tigers. A tiger, he said, had been killed the day before at Rakímatábád, a village four miles off on the other side of the river. This village lies at the foot of Darfek, a magnificent mountain upwards of ten thousand feet high, a grand feature in the landscape seen from Rustamábád. On the top are caverns, in which the ice never melts. Darfek rises sheer from the plain, though not far off are hills about 2,000 feet high. The same person told me that he had not heard of more than one case in which a man was killed by a tiger, but horses and cattle, he said, were constantly destroyed. A tiger's skin sold for about a guinea. We left Rustamábád at 9 A.M., and at 3 P.M. alighted at the house of Injali, the head man of Saláwán, a little village in the jungle, having come about fifteen miles, though the distance is called three farsakhs. The road was a stony series of ascents and descents, varied occasionally by a slough, which the trampling of animals had honeycombed. On the right hand, as we rode, we had in general a precipice,

towards which the path, for in places it was hardly more than a path, shelved in a sinister fashion. About six miles from Rustamábád we stopped to lunch beside a half finished bridge, over a rapid stream that falls into the White River. We had now crossed the great mountain chain which borders Persia to the north, and cuts off the Caspian provinces from the table-land, and had descended into the low country, which, as it were, rims that range. All around was a beautiful wood, part of that great forest which extends some 400 miles from Astarábád to Talish. Gangs of men were felling trees in all directions, the timber being easily floated down towards the Caspian. The road itself was not devoid of animation; muleteers, with their animals heavily laden, and many peasants passed us continually. The Ghilánís struck me as sickly-looking, but with good features. A mile or so from Saláwán, we stopped at the shrine of the Imámzádah Háshem, beautifully situated on a conical hill about 500 feet high, at some distance from the mountains. The building is square, each side being thirty feet long, and a wooden verandah surrounds it. The mutawalli, or guardian, said it was

first erected eight centuries ago, but had been frequently repaired, and the last time by Minuchihr Khan, seventy-six years before. Tigers, wolves, and leopards, he said, were very numerous there. The panorama from this hill was enchanting, having all the elements that make up beauty in a landscape: verdure, fine woods, a great river, rocks, hills, and a huge mountain overtopping all. It being the eve of the Nauroz, or festival of the vernal equinox, numbers of women were coming to the shrine. There was a marked difference in their physiognomy from that of the Tehránís. In Ghilán the people are more like Spaniards, and the dress of many of the peasants resembles that of the contrabandistas.

Our lodging at Saláwán, there being no post-house, was in a farmhouse within an enclosure. All around was dense jungle, with innumerable marks of wild hog. I observed that the barns and houses about were raised on platforms on account of the wild beasts.

We left Saláwán at 9 A.M. on the 21st of March, and, after fighting our way through jungle and swamp for a quarter of a mile, got upon the Resht

road. An excellent road it was at first, like an English one, with ditches on each side, and a wattle fence a foot high. We began to wonder at what we had heard of the swamps of Resht, but this wonder soon ceased, for the good road was only in patches, while between were veritable Sloughs of Despond. The curious feature of these places was that at regular intervals there was a thin ridge of hard ground, with deep mire on each side—in fact, a sort of mud-ripple. Thus the horses were kept in a sort of treadmill. If they missed the hard ground, down they went into the mud over their knees. It really looked as if the ground had been made into traps for breaking the legs of unwary beasts. My chestnut horse fell into a ditch, where the mud rose to his neck, and most of the other horses fell, and were dragged out with difficulty. Fane's horse was lamed by a deep cut, and altogether we were a discomfited party. About half way, however, or six miles from Resht, we came to a sarái, where a fair was being held. After this the road improved, and three miles further on we were met by Saiyid Bákir, brother of the Vakáya Nigár, or foreign-office agent

at Resht, and half-a-dozen other notabilities, who with their servants formed a numerous *cortége*, and a mile onward we encountered some other persons sent out to receive us, with six led horses, and our Istikbál, or reception-party, was complete.

The environs of Resht are not unlike those of our English country towns. Tiled cottages peeped out from among gardens; there were green lanes in which the box-tree was very conspicuous, and plenty of hedges formed of limber boughs interlaced among upright stakes. On entering the town, a mass of people followed us and filled the streets. The children were quite remarkable for their beauty, with true English pink and white complexions, and hazel eyes. We stopped at the Consulate, when I dismissed my Istikbál with the usual formula, "You have endured much trouble on my account."

After resting a little, we walked to the house the prince-governor had provided for us, which was, truth to say, a miserable dirty ruin. It stood at one corner of a wide, open space covered with grass like an English common, at the opposite end of which was the English consulate. The houses in Resht are all

covered with tiles, and are not badly built. A simple mud house would be destroyed in a day by the rains of Ghilán, rains so constant that from the 21st of March, the day of our arrival, to the 1st of April, that of our departure, we had not one fine hour. In such weather our ruin was not an agreeable residence, but we petitioned in vain for another. The truth is, the Ghilánís are thoroughly bigoted, and they would not, of their own free-will, have an infidel in their abodes.

I was very much occupied while at Resht, otherwise it would have been a *triste séjour*, for it was too wet to ride or walk, and there is nothing to see at the place itself, except the making of certain embroideries, which are deservedly celebrated. But to see these it would be necessary to go to private houses, and as women as well as men are employed upon them, there would be a breach of Persian etiquette in examining them.

Resht is a town with about 15,000 inhabitants. It is the capital of Ghilán, and before the Great Plague of 1831 was four times as populous as it now is. Places are shown a mile beyond the present

boundaries of the city to which the former building extended, and mounds full of bones in various places indicate the greatness of the mortality when the destroyer came. A nobleman who was sent to look after property during the pestilence is said to have gone poor and to have come away rich, and other stories, like those of Defoe's tale of the Plague of London, are related. As the exportation of silk from Ghilán is enormous, and there are coal mines and other sources of wealth, there is every reason to feel assured that, with proper encouragement, Resht would become an important and flourishing city. I discovered in my onward journey the reason of the languor that affects the commerce—but of that anon.

Before my departure, I went one day to the Spectacle Lakes, as they are called—two pieces of water abounding in wild duck, with a fine stream running into them, about a mile and a half from the town. They have their name from their oval shape, and from being joined by a thin bridge of land like the bridge of a pair of spectacles. There is an avenue of trees part of the way to them; but this avenue terminates in a swampy jungle, which

defies approach. Another day I spent in visiting the prince-governor and the Vakaya Nigár. The palace at Resht is the very *beau idéal* of a goblin-haunted house, vast, gloomy, ruinous. The artillerymen on guard were dirty and slovenly, and everything seemed to breathe of decay. The prince himself, Ardashír Mirza, the eighth son of Abbás Mirza, was haggard, suffering from gout, and looked as if he had been visited by spectres. His manner, however, was dignified, and his conversation agreeable. Like Bahrám Mirza, he delighted to talk of the old days of Hart and Lindsay, and said Hart had made all the princes mount guard, and had given them nothing but dry bread for three days. Abbás Mirza took no notice of their hardships, and supported Hart in all he did. Some one present mentioned the story of Hart's dying of cholera at Tabríz, and of the death being reported to Abbás Mirza, at the same time as that of another well-known man who died on the same day. "What!" said the prince. "Hart Sahib dead! Alas! alas! —— dead, too! Ah! *Jahannum!*" "Gehenna."

From the palace I went to the house of a cele-

brated spiritual chief, Háji Mulá Rafi, who leads the people of Ghilán whithersoever he will. I beheld an old man with a Jewish countenance, a hooked nose, and an immense white turban. We sate on the ground in a room filled with books, all manuscripts of course. We spoke of the famine, and he said he had given two túmáns, about 1*l.*, to each individual of several thousand people. He did not, however, tell me that this was money collected at his instance from the rich, and that he himself gave only his influence. I also visited the Muínu't tujjár, or chief merchant, who was ill in bed in a room heated like a furnace. His discourse was all of religion. He spoke of Jesus as a great prophet, but said, "The Nasárá suppose he was God; but how could he be God, when he used to pray? Prayer is for the creature, not for the Creator, and this shows that Jesus was human."

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